NRA U.S. CODE

The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXL NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1935 No. 3637

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES—DOMESTIC: One Year $5; Two Years $8; Three Years $11. CANADIAN: 50 cents a year additional. FOREIGN: $1 a year additional.

THE NATION. Published weekly at 20 Vesey St., New York. Entered as second class matter December 13, 1887, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., and under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1935, by the Nation, Inc.; Oswald Garrison Villard, Publisher.
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REVOLUTION has broken out in Cuba. The constitution has been suspended. A state of siege has been proclaimed in Havana Province. A general call to arms has been issued. Wholesale arrests have taken place—and these include such outstanding intellectuals as the historian Herminio Portell Vilá, who was a delegate to the Seventh Inter-American Conference at Montevideo. The military are in control and at this writing have managed temporarily to ride the rising groundswell of revolt. But virtually every important group in Cuba—the A. B. C., the *Autenticos,* the students and radicals as well as many conservatives—is in opposition, and Mendieta's own personal following, divided and redivided by successive defections, leaves him, much like Casabianca, alone on the burning deck. Alone, save for Batista and his army! Thus Cuba is back where it was in the closing days of Machado—with the government retaining its hold solely by virtue of the military. The only immediate alternatives are tragic: a dictatorship by Batista, whether or not the well-meaning but ineffective Mendieta remains as a figure-head; or civil war. Thus in Cuba the "good neighbor" policy of the Roosevelt Administration ends in disaster. The blame therefor lies squarely upon the shoulders of Assistant Secretary Sumner Welles, who has dictated the Administration's Cuban policy from the beginning. His obdurate refusal to recognize the Grau San Martin administration, the one Cuban government which represented the aspirations of the Cuban people, could not but lead to chaos. Moreover, the Welles attitude nullified the benefits of the abolition of the Platt Amendment and of the subsequent commercial treaty. To Cubans our policy is inexplicable except as a continuation of the old imperialist domination. Its ineptness has deeply wronged both Cuba and the United States and has demonstrated again that the best program can be wrecked by inadequate administration.

THE SENATE DEADLOCK has now become chronic, and what began as a mere flurry of discontent with the Administration has turned into a siege. The Democratic majority, being too large, has broken to pieces even more than the similarly unwieldy Tory majority in the British Parliament. The struggle with the White House of the past two months will continue unabated this week, with Senator Long on good maneuvering ground in his attack on Postmaster General Farley. The work-relief bill is only one of the bones of contention. The continuance of the NRA now ranks with it as a disputed measure. The Senate will take a hand in the tussle over Comptroller General McCarl, who has turned his office into an obstruction for expenditure which he does not like, but who will have the help of the Senate rebels now that the President has ruled against him. The House has passed the abolition of the "pink slip" after a beautifully executed campaign of pressure from the newspapers, whose publishers saw to it that no day and few pages were without sly propaganda. The Senate, however, may balance the House by passing drastic legislation for full publicity on tax payments. The House, too, this week may register the first test of strength on the bonus. As the session drags on, the prestige of the President continues to wane, and what is worse, the faith of the country in the democratic method is being slowly sapped. The country is accustomed to Congressional paralysis, but one is puzzled to see it come so soon after a striking party victory at the polls.

THE CROSS-WORD PUZZLE of the Ickes-Moses fight has at last been solved by Mayor LaGuardia with a well-worded letter ending in a P.S. meaning much more than it seems to. To be sure the whole affair still remains a puzzle because the Mayor's letter to Secretary Ickes was mainly devoted to Langdon Post, who had up to that time taken practically no part in the controversy; but unless Robert Moses is ungracious enough to make a public statement Secretary Ickes has had the last cross word. In his letter to Mayor LaGuardia he construed Order Number 129 in such a way that Mr. Moses will continue to head the Tri-Borough Bridge Authority, but he noted at length that Mr. Moses is serving not two but three masters. At any rate Mr. Moses will build the bridge, which is what the White House sought to prevent. And Mr. Ickes, who tried to find a way to please the whim of the White House, now saves his own face by his ruling that in future no Mr. Moses shall hold more than one job at a time.

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THE THREAT OF WAR in the Far East has been removed, temporarily at least, by agreement on the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchoukuo. After a prolonged period in which both sides resorted to every device known to Oriental bargaining, from threats and withdrawals to subsidized banditry, the outcome appears to be distinctly favorable to the Soviet Union. At the outset Japan, disguised as Manchoukuo, offered 50,000,000 yen, while Moscow demanded the equivalent of about 250,000,000 yen. The price agreed upon was 170,000,000 yen, of which 30,000,000 is to be applied to a retirement allowance for Soviet employees of the railway. The arrangement is particularly satisfactory to the Soviet Union because in the interval in which negotiations were being carried on the Japanese finished a competing railway line from Hsinking to Tumen, which rendered the Chinese Eastern a very dubious asset so far as revenue is concerned. The Soviets have also been victorious on two other points. Upon their insistence the Japanese have guaranteed full payment by Manchoukuo, and half of the amount is to be advanced in cash at the time of the formal transfer of the railway. Moreover, the Kremlin has consistently refused to extend de jure recognition to Manchoukuo, even though the purchase may be construed as de facto recognition. But aside from details, the fact that Japan has agreed to purchase a railway which would be its for the taking in the event of hostilities is the clearest sign that war is not an immediate prospect.

HITLER having recovered from his "cold," Sir John Simon has once more been invited to Berlin to discuss the problems of European security. In the meantime Sir Anthony Eden will visit Moscow and Warsaw, and will presumably be in a position to instruct his superior in some detail regarding the Soviet and Polish attitude toward the proposed Eastern Locarno. Despite this technical advantage, no one doubts that the atmosphere is distinctly less favorable to friendly conversations than it was prior to the publication of the British White Paper. While the Reich has probably never intended to enter a general security agreement unless forced to do so by external pressure, its resistance has been increased by the allegedly biased nature of the British charge regarding German rearmament. Yet, paradoxical though it may seem, the dissension between Britain and Germany is one of the more hopeful aspects of the present European situation. Nazi tactics have been directed toward winning the sympathy of the British in the hope of breaking the iron ring which Soviet-French diplomacy has built around the Third Reich, and the Nazis had derived considerable encouragement from editorials in the London *Times* advocating the support of Germany's position. The publication of the White Paper came as a severe shock, leaving Germany once more faced with the necessity of making concessions on the security pacts if it is to avoid isolation. There is no assurance that such concessions will be made, but in any event Hitler has lost rather than gained as a result of recent developments.

AFTER A SANGUINARY STRUGGLE, costing perhaps 4,000 lives, the Tsaldaris government appears to have gained the upper hand in Greece. While it is still too early to determine whether the victory of the government forces in Thrace will bring a collapse of the entire revolutionary movement, the indications now are that the Venizelos republican faction will ultimately be crushed. Regrettable though this may be from many angles, the issues have been by no means as clear-cut as in the somewhat similar conflicts in Austria and Spain. Tsaldaris himself holds relatively moderate views but has been seriously handicapped by the fact that his Cabinet contains extreme monarchists as well as two prominent military leaders, Generals Kondylis and Metaxes, who are known to be reactionaries. As the nature of the revolt has indicated, the Venizelists have also been largely dependent on military and naval support, though they have enjoyed a considerable measure of popular sympathy. The radical parties had formed a united front against the threat of a fascist dictatorship under Tsaldaris, but it is not clear that they participated actively in the revolt otherwise than by spontaneous uprisings, such as the forming of soviets in Kavalla and elsewhere. Even if Tsaldaris is victorious, he will be faced with extreme discontent among all sections of the population and with rivalry within his own camp—scarcely a basis for permanent power.

SWEDEN is considering a bold and far-reaching proposal which can be paralleled only in Soviet legislation. After a prolonged investigation by a special commission a report has been submitted recommending that abortion be legalized under certain conditions, and that existing penalties be mitigated even where these conditions are violated. If the commission's recommendations are adopted—as appears likely—interruption of pregnancy will be countenanced whenever the child's birth is likely to endanger seriously the welfare of the mother, or when there is no apparent provision for the support of mother and child. It will also be permitted whenever there is reason to assume that the child would inherit, from either of its parents, a serious disease, insanity, or feeble-mindedness; and in cases in which pregnancy came as the result of violence or in which the mother is under fifteen years of age. No abortion will be regarded as lawful unless it takes place under sanitary conditions after consultation with at least two physicians. Improved education on sex problems and the granting of adequate aid to needy mothers are urged as necessary supplements to this reform.

THE LUNDEEN Unemployment and Social Insurance bill cleared its first major hurdle on March 8 when the Labor Committee voted seven to six to report it favorably to the House. Previously the subcommittee which had conducted hearings on the bill had recommended its approval by a six-to-one majority, with Representative Wood, president of the Missouri State Federation of Labor, casting the sole dissenting vote. Faced by a virtual conspiracy of silence on the part of the press, and opposed both by big business and by the conservative elements in the A. F. of L. leadership, the triumph of the bill in committee was due to constant pressure by organizations of the unemployed and by some 2,600 A. F. of L. locals, who see in it the only hope of genuine social security. The chances of the bill receiving serious consideration in the House have been increased by the desperate plight of the Administration's federal-state "security" program. With twenty state legislatures already adjourned or scheduled to adjourn within a few days, not to meet again until 1937, it is evident that

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the Wagner-Lewis bill, still mired in the Ways and Means Committee, cannot be put into general operation for at least three years. While there is little likelihood of the Workers' bill being adopted at this session, its presence on the floor as an alternative to the Administration's program should do much to educate Congress and the American people regarding the fundamental principles of security.

FIFTEEN MILLION ACRES of land are available for settling share-croppers and tenant farmers on their own farms, and 500,000 families can be settled in five years if the Bankhead bill to create a Farm Tenant Corporation passes Congress. This bill offers the beginning of a solution of the crisis among tenant farmers in the South. It is the democratic approach to the problem, as suppression of unions and anti-sedition legislation are the fascist approach. The proposed corporation would start with capital of $100,000,000, and would have authority to issue a billion dollars' worth of bonds. The unit farm would cost $2,000 and would be about the size of the present tenant farm. Interest and amortization charges on the government loan would probably be around $80 a year. The cotton crop, at the present price, would be worth $200 a year. This would leave the new farmer only $120 a year, a pitifully small income, and part of it would be absorbed by taxation and the costs of production. But even if he had only $100 a year, he would be able to buy in stores where he did not pay interest to his landlord, and half of his income would go toward the ownership of his land. He would be working for himself. Once settled permanently, he could be taught to grow vegetables, keep pigs, and enlarge his present diet. His children would be subject to regular education and he himself to social influences. Within a generation the system of land tenancy in the South could be ended, and the poorest of America's submerged millions be intrenched in a position of slowly expanding independence. The immediate economic gains for the tenant farmers certainly are not generous, but no legislation before the present Congress promises to work a more fundamental or desirable reform.

WHEN THE PRESIDENT wrote his historic letter to Chairman Biddle of the National Labor Relations Board telling him to keep hands off newspaper cases, the matter was so worded as to give the impression that the Newspaper Industrial Board would work effectively if only it could be saved from outside meddling. We protested at the time that the newspaper board was not and had not been functioning efficiently and that Chairman Biddle was being unfairly slurred by the President. Now we read a letter by Administrator W. A. Harriman of the NRA to Publisher Harvey Kelley, chairman of the NIB, complaining of the continued paralysis of his board and its failure even to complete its panel of impartial chairmen. Since the President's letter, writes Mr. Harriman, "the NRA has naturally felt more responsible than ever for the proper functioning of the NIB. As you know, one of the great sources of dissatisfaction has been the deadlocking of the board on fundamental matters, including even the question as to what may be submitted to the ninth member." This testimony from the NRA should be called to the attention of Mr. Richberg, who advised the President to take away the newspaper cases from the Biddle board. If he were burdened with a sense of logic he would reverse his advice and help the newspaper workers of America to obtain prompt consideration from a board which can be effective. We nominate as such the National Labor Relations Board.

THE LARGE and amiable Heywood Broun, whom we like to think of as Organized Labor, might have been a second Gulliver in Lilliputia when he arrived in Newark, New Jersey, last week and found himself beset by a breed of little men including a publisher, a vice-chancellor, and two receivership trustees, carrying among them a big injunction covered with sixteen spikes with which they hoped to bring the giant to terms. The Berry injunction is one of the most sweeping in labor history, and the long and successful efforts of Messrs. Norris and LaGuardia to have an anti-injunction bill enacted might seem to have been in vain were it not so unmistakable and complete a denial of a free press that the publishers can't defend it; Mr. Russell of the *Ledger*, when he encountered the forbidden but famous Mr. Broun outside his office, helped to violate his own injunction by accepting five copies of the *Guild Reporter*, whose distribution is barred. As we write, Mr. Broun is searching for a large radio station from which he can annoy Vice-Chancellor Berry and L. T. Russell—which is also forbidden by the injunction. So far none of the big stations have considered Heywood Broun entertaining enough to give him free time. We confess we are surprised. We should have said that Heywood annoying the publishers would be vastly more entertaining to the great radio audience than, say, Elisha Hanson being sanctimonious about the purity of news.

"U DON'T NEED A BISCUIT." This is the slogan with which 3,000 workers of the National Biscuit Company in New York City are trying to enlist the aid of the consumer in winning a strike which is now in its tenth week. The New York walkout is part of an almost complete tie-up which involves nearly 6,000 workers and has affected plants in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The union is trying to force the employers to live up to an agreement drawn up by the Regional Labor Board last year and accepted by the company. It granted a closed union shop, equal pay for equal work, and increased relief periods, and it covered the Philadelphia and New York plants. Continued violation of its terms in Philadelphia precipitated the strike, and the company is now obviously determined to smash the union at any cost. The Inside Bakery Workers' Local 19585, a federal union affiliated with the A. F. of L., having begun a year ago with a group of seventy, now embraces the entire New York plant. It is an industrial union admitting to membership everyone connected with the plant except the office personnel. Moreover, it has an understanding with the teamsters' union, which means that the drivers working for the National Biscuit factories are also on strike. So far the company has not yielded even to the point of discussing terms. Nor have the strikers shown any sign of giving in. Their solidarity has not been broken either by the company's calls to "loyal workers" to return or by mass arrests and the other painful tactics customarily pursued by police on strike duty.

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Terms for Extending the NRA

THE NRA presents one of the most confusing problems in America. One can look at it through the eyes of Senator Borah, see the growth it promises to monopolies and the injury it works on small business men, and cry out for its abolition. No NRA is certainly preferable to a bad one, and the present one may be bad beyond redemption. It was a child of spontaneous birth, and much of the cogitation which should have gone into its creation has had to be expended on afterthoughts. Yet an NRA of the right kind is not only desirable but essential to the survival of the public in its struggle with finance capitalism. The monopolies are there, stronger than mere prohibitions, and the only way to control them may be through a required cooperation with the government. The treatment calls for new concepts which are difficult to formulate and a new technique most of which still needs to be developed. But more than these it calls for a spirit of courage and determination on the part of the Administration, particularly the President, for which no guaranty can be given. A perfect legislative and administrative NRA machine would be worthless without unflinching leadership, and the President's part in the NRA so far cannot be construed as a promise that the needed kind of NRA is going to be evolved. We do not say that the NRA should be merely a defense for the public against big business and industry. They too should benefit from it. But as things now stand the benefit is preponderantly on their side, and certainly the first condition for extending the NRA must be the certainty that it will become a government supervision and guidance of business and not simply the governmental sanction of business domination.

We believe it would be shortsighted to perpetuate the NRA solely to save the minor reforms for labor which have been accomplished. Maximum hours and minimum wages and the abolition of child labor, one is told, must be preserved at all cost. The reforms themselves are not as substantial as the claims for them. All three have been victories more for ideas than for realities. Minimum wages are not being observed throughout the country. There is an element of sham in the statement that 90 per cent of coded industries have a maximum forty-hour week. This was Mr. Richberg's contention before the Senate committee last week. And when Senators looked through the NRA's own reports on hours they found important evidence had been carefully deleted from the copies in their possession. The fact is that the industries with the largest employment have the longest hours, and 40 per cent of all coded employees work more than forty hours, and 10 per cent of them work more than forty-eight hours. There is a sham element, too, in the statement repeatedly made that child labor has been abolished. It still thrives in industries relying on home work, and it is maintained in the newspaper industry with the benignant protection of the President. Child labor in agriculture has hardly been touched by other branches of the government. Such gains as have been made in curtailing child labor are valuable, but they are not enough to weigh decisively in the continuance of the NRA. Certainly minimum wages and maximum hours could be saved by special legislation. And while some government agency would be needed to administer and enforce its provisions, this agency need not be the NRA and should not be unless the NRA is certain to serve its purpose in other fields.

The first condition which Congress should impose in extending the NRA must be on itself. It must balance the NRA with the reality of collective bargaining by passing the Wagner bill. To do the one without the other would be to deliver the country in fetters to the employers. When the NRA was first conceived, the need for the balance of labor power was taken for granted. Even some industrialists recognized that they could not ask the increase of their strength without accepting the growth of organization by labor. It is a commentary on the drift toward a fascist mentality in this country that what was taken for granted less than two years ago is stubbornly resisted today. Now collective bargaining is openly flouted, and industry sees the hope of thwarting it altogether. The President himself is on that side with his philosophy of works councils and proportional representation. Also of essential value is the representation of consumers' interests. Here, too, the original conception has not endured. Probably the mistake was in believing that consumers might express themselves and bring pressure through some special agency, artificially set up and sustained by no nation-wide, conscious public opinion. The organization of consumers presents a difficulty, and it may be that the President and the board of the NRA must feel and behave like consumers' trustees without advisory councils to relieve them of the responsibility. To a wide extent the first consumer of industry is industry itself, and the retail buyer, or his representative, is not the best of all judges of the problems affecting consumers.

We should like to be sure that the NRA is to have a fair chance of growing to be the organ the country needs before urging Congress to extend it. That would entail certainly a change of heart by the President. He must not appoint another chairman so grossly unqualified as S. Clay Williams. He must not put the NRA under the one-man rule of General Wood or anyone remotely like him. He must not suppress its reports. He must accept the advice of his board, as he refused to do in extending the automobile code and in imposing the telegraph and telephone code. He must not make another gentlemen's agreement, or whatever he cares to call it, as he did with the newspaper publishers. And when it comes to a test of strength on an issue where the public interest is at stake, he must fight. Admittedly, we must ask in the same breath that the leopard change its spots. The seventeen points of Mr. Richberg are of no great importance one way or the other unless the President will use the NRA for the public good. If he is to continue his course of the past, wavering each time he meets resistance from industry, the NRA had better be scrapped and Congress had better hasten to formulate laws on collective bargaining, minimum wages, and maximum hours, leaving the Federal Trade Commission to wage the rearguard battle against finance capitalism.

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Ship Subsidies and War

WHATEVER else may be said of Franklin Roosevelt he cannot be accused of being slavishly bound by the previous policies of the party of which he is the leader. The latest instance of this is his urging Congress to grant open subsidies to the merchant marine. The suggestion is enough to make Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, Thomas F. Bayard, and a host of other Democratic leaders turn in their graves. There are only two things to be said in favor of the President's message: it is frank, straightforward, and entirely praiseworthy when it calls upon the Congress to end the present mendacious and deceitful policy of mail payments which bear in some cases no relation to the mail carried; and it clearly states the three reasons for his belief that the government should go contrary to the historic teachings of the Democratic Party.

These three reasons are, first, that subsidies now granted to foreign shipping may be used to the detriment of American shippers; second, that the United States might find itself seriously crippled for lack of ships in the event of a major war in which it was a neutral; and, third, that in the event of a war in which the United States took part we should need ships for transports, for naval auxiliaries, and to maintain our commerce. The last two obviously have to deal with war and assume, first, that there will soon be a major war, and, second, that this country, which has signed the Kellogg Peace Pact renouncing war, will pay no attention to that solemn pledge and fight again. It is true that during the early days of the World War our shippers had some difficulty in obtaining the necessary bottoms and were compelled to pay high freight rates. But such overcharges as were made then would total a small amount indeed compared with the huge sums that would have been paid out if President Harrison had had his way in 1888 and the country had paid subsidies from that year down to 1914. The simple truth is that we were without a merchant marine from the end of the Civil War until the World War. The tremendous growth of the country, notably of our foreign trade, makes it impossible for anyone to charge that our development was hampered by the use of foreign ships.

It is also true that we have only been engaged in one major foreign war in 146 years of our national life, and that if the present temper of the people of the United States is any criterion they will not be deceived into taking part in another, in view of the disastrous consequences of our participation in the last. To engage upon this economically indefensible policy of ship subsidies on the gamble that we might need ships in another foreign war would be folly indeed, all the more so as it would be impossible to build up a merchant marine which would be adequate for a war in which we should take part. Of this the proof is the thousands of ships we had to build during the World War, and the fact that to move the same number of troops to Europe again we should need at least one-third more vessels because of the enormous increase in the impedimenta and equipment of an army since the World War ended.

Turning to the economic question itself, the President advances arguments which are being similarly advanced in England, Germany, Italy, France, and Japan—that because the other countries indulge in rebates, subsidies, and differentials we must sin likewise. The truth is that our subsidies have been primarily responsible for the spread of the evil abroad. Mr. Roosevelt asks government aid to cover, first, the difference in the cost of building ships here, second, the difference in the cost of operating ships, and, third, the differing subsidies granted by other nations. In other words, the country is again to be called upon to create a great vested interest, to make up out of the general funds the deficit arising because an unneeded industry is to be kept alive for purely nationalistic and militaristic reasons.

The Nation has always wished for a merchant marine under the American flag, but it does not believe that a worth-while one can be achieved in this way. President Roosevelt's proposal threatens commercial war on the high seas. The true remedies lie elsewhere—in international agreements, for example, such as the international scheme for "pooling" freight ships proposed in January last by the preliminary international conference for the rationalization of shipping. The real obstacles are our antiquated navigation laws and our destructive tariff policy, which throttle our export business and make it impossible for merchant ships to obtain adequate cargoes. In addition, there is the law forbidding the purchase of ships where they can be bought cheapest; we are told that we must build up American shipyards and support shipbuilders whose almost incredible misdeeds have just been shown up by the Nye inquiry.

These are only a few of the arguments against subsidies. They would be sufficient for any Congress which undertook to consider the matter seriously, judiciously, and free from the present war scare in Washington.

The Utility Racket

FOR those who believe that the evils of an unregenerate capitalism can be sanctified by public regulation, we suggest that an evening be spent reading the 200-page report of the New York Power Authority on the financial structure of the electric companies serving New York City. Government reports are notoriously dull, but if one has a liking for tales of modern brigandage and is not too insistent on the ultimate triumph of virtue, this document is worth the time spent on it. The story is not in any sense a simple one. Within recent years the utilities have gone to great lengths to increase the intricacy of their capital structure with a view to confusing not only the public but the regulating commissions as well. Yet it is possible to put the results of their financial chicanery to a relatively simple test by comparing the companies' valuation of the existing plant, which is used as a basis for determining rates, with its actual worth as determined by competent engineers.

While it has long been evident that the capital valuation used as a rate base had been heavily watered, no details have hitherto been available as to how this was done. Attention has been centered chiefly on the inflation of the original capitalization—which in the case of the New York electric companies was $79,000,000, or more than half the total fixed capital. But this piece of highwaymanship is but a minor part of the entire write-up. The excess profits obtained on the basis of the original water have constantly

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been reinvested in such a way as to widen the breach between the true and the nominal value of the plant. All the ingenuity used by a Mitchell or a Mellon in evading the income tax has been employed in the gentleman's game of mulcting the public. Companies have failed to use available net income to set up a reserve against obsolescence. and have carried superseded equipment—described by the Authority as "property emeritus"—as part of the fixed capital. They have invested surplus profits in construction with little regard to actual needs. For example, the capacity of the existing plants in New York City is more than double the highest recorded peak load, and although two-thirds of this capacity is in stations constructed since 1920, the older and less efficient plants have nearly all been kept in operation. As the result of extravagant building and poor management the capital increment per kilowatt of added peak load jumped from $252 in the 1910-20 period to $638 between 1920 and 1930, which was much higher than that of any other city of comparable size. This tendency was accentuated by an inflation of construction expenditures through contracts let to favored individuals. One of the large new stations of the New York Edison Company, built in 1926, is listed as having cost more than double the amount required for other modern stations, and nearly twice the assessed valuation.

After making a careful analysis of all these factors, the Power Authority estimates the total amount of water in the fixed capital of New York companies to be at least $280,000,000, or 62 per cent of the true capital value of the existing properties. At 7 per cent, this means an excess annual charge of $19,500,000 to the consumers—nearly $10 per meter. The total overcharge in the twenty-seven years of public-service regulation, after making allowance for a 7 per cent return on all necessary capital investments, has been approximately $450,000,000. If the city had purchased the electrical system in 1907 instead of establishing a system of regulation, and had done its financing at 4½ per cent, the gross revenue collected from consumers would have covered all costs, including depreciation, taxes, and interest, wiped out all indebtedness, and provided a surplus of $140,000,000 for the city treasury.

The Power Authority report is particularly timely because of the danger that the Public Service Commission will accede to the utilities' request for unification on the basis of their figure of capitalization. This would not only tend to give permanent sanction to the existing rate base with its $280,000,000 of water and thereby prevent adequate rate reduction, but would increase the difficulty of distributing cheap power from the St. Lawrence waterway when that project is completed. The report should encourage the city in its determination to construct a "yardstick" plant to furnish at least part of its own current. But its chief value lies in its exposure of the ineffectiveness of regulation as a means of checking gross exploitation on the part of "public service" corporations. Prior to 1920, it is true, the Public Service Commission appears to have been able to restrict the tendency to overcapitalization. But in the past fourteen years, despite the expenditure of millions of dollars in public hearings, the utilities have run roughshod over all efforts at restraint. The Washington plan will not check this tendency; only the competition of publicly owned "yardstick" plants or public operation will do it, with the latter obviously the preferable alternative.

Strengthening the Wagner Bill

SENATOR WAGNER'S National Labor Relations bill, now under discussion in public hearings, has won the general support of organized labor and the equally general opposition of the organized employers. The attitude of the Administration has not been revealed, but the backers of the bill are not relying upon help from the White House. For the Wagner bill cuts clean through the conflicts of interpretation and method and authority which characterize the present labor policy of the government and sets forth a clearly defined procedure for establishing and enforcing collective bargaining.

The measure obviously needs all the help it can get to counteract the attacks of its enemies and the aloofness of the Administration. For this reason the recommendations of the Twentieth Century Fund Committee on Government and Labor, headed by William H. Davis, formerly NRA Compliance Director, are particularly timely. Based upon a study involving several months' work by a competent research staff, the recommendations have every guaranty of scholarly impartiality; they carry additional weight as the considered program of a group of men experienced in the handling of labor relations, including the liberal employer Henry S. Dennison, William M. Leiserson, former Governor Winant of New Hampshire, and others of equal standing. Pointing out the "confusion of function, overlapping of authority, and deficiency of power" which have marred the efforts of the agencies for labor relations set up under the NRA, the committee's report follows the Wagner bill in recommending an independent, semi-judicial federal agency with genuine powers to enforce the labor law. It also backs the bill's demand for a real guaranty of labor's right to organize and to choose its representatives by "majority rule." But the committee report goes beyond the Wagner proposal at several important points. The law, it asserts, should do more than guarantee and police collective bargaining; it should offer positive inducements to labor and industry to enter into trade agreements. The committee would therefore add to the federal board's powers the authority to enforce collective agreements which are voluntarily registered with it. In other words, if the employer and the union in any case requested the registration of an agreement, the government board would be required by law to bring its enforcement powers to bear on either party which might subsequently violate it. This is a novel proposal and a shrewd one, though it would necessitate special provisions to protect labor against an unforeseen increase in the cost of living. Unlike the Wagner bill, the recommendations would strengthen the federal mediation service, provide for fifteen days' notice of changes in wages or working conditions, and require investigation of major industrial disputes by a Presidential committee, which would make recommendations for settlement. At no point in the procedure would the right to strike be abridged. We believe that Senator Wagner might strengthen his admirable measure in several directions by amendments along the lines laid down by the Twentieth Century Fund's report.

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Issues and Men

The Great Judge

SO the good and great judge has gone, superb in his courage, superb in his adherence to old-fashioned American ideals of liberty, superb in his maintenance of a wonderful tradition. With the death of the second Oliver Wendell Holmes a generation practically disappears; in the handful of remaining survivors of the Civil War there is not one man of distinction. In a way he was even a link with the Revolution, for his grandmother witnessed the British evacuation of Boston, saw the redcoats surrender the city to the despised revolutionists—and he heard the story from her. By inheritance he was a Brahman of the Brahmans. The "Back Bay" of Boston and Harvard had stamped him as their own, and conservatism was his cradle. His gentle father, the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table, whose literary fame improperly overshadowed his talents as a progressive and able physician, for all his geniality and mellowness was no reformer and no friend to reformers. Unlike Ralph Waldo Emerson, he had no sympathy whatever for the Abolitionists. Wendell Phillips was anathema to him. He was the aristocrat of the breakfast-table as well as the autocrat. The Boston world in which he moved was of the best. He might pioneer in his own profession, but as for those who championed labor, or social advances, they were beyond the pale.

It is odd, indeed, that this man's son became known as a great liberal, for that, in most respects, he precisely was not. Like his father, he had no use for reformers and liberals per se. His affection for his classmate, Wendell Phillips Garrison, all his life an editor, or the editor, of *The Nation*, was never dimmed; but for the crusading spirit and the Godkin-Garrison method of attacking evils, the Justice had no sympathy at all. He could not have endured the militant spirits of radical causes had he come into contact with them; they would have offended him to the core. So he must have pondered with cynical humor upon the fact that he became the idol of progressives who believed that America must evolve and change. Toward them his attitude was probably like that of the New York editor who once told a group of civic reformers that if he was to continue to support them they must keep away from him.

The explanation lies in Justice Holmes's devotion to the Constitution and its underlying ideals of free speech, free thought, and free assembly. He was steeped in that great American tradition, and whatever his own personal tendencies or likings might be, he continued to the end true to that tradition. Not his aristocratic training or anything else could stand in the way. That there was this conflict in him renders the more magnificent his steadfast adherence to principle, his brilliant, never-failing defense of the rights of the individual. There were no "buts" in his defense of the fundamentals; none of that hateful, self-contradictory stupidity which says: "I believe in free speech, but there are limits beyond which it must not go." And so during all those sad, reactionary post-World War years it was to him, and to Justice Brandeis, that liberals invariably turned. A mighty fortress is a just, fearless, and devoted man.

That the Justice was well aware of his own prowess and reputation is true. Vanity was a part of his make-up, but so were wit and kindly humor with a touch of boyishness in them to the very last—as when from his sick bed he thumbed his nose at Felix Frankfurter. Often he pretended to be stern and severe, fixing you with those wonderful eyes under their heavy beetling eyebrows, only to reveal in the next minute the little joke he was aiming at you. It was astounding how fresh and clear his mind was, how tolerant, for all his age and conservatism, of new ideas, and how keen his understanding of the people and trends around him. Once when I spoke in terms of great admiration of that splendid band of young Harvard men, of whom he was one, who went from the university into the carnage of the Civil War, he said: "Nonsense, we were no better than your generation and, pointing to my undergraduate son, yours is not nearly as fine as this oncoming generation."

To have survived his Antietam wound for nearly seventy-three years was extraordinary indeed. His three wounds alone kept him from much higher rank. His regiment was the Twentieth Massachusetts, rarely fortunate in its West Point colonel and the discipline of its young Harvard officers, many of them friends and chums. Rushed to the battlefield when it was only half recruited, never reaching its maximum strength, it was plunged into the worst disaster of the early days of the war—Ball's Bluff, where it lost two-fifths of its numbers in killed, wounded, captured, and drowned, with Holmes disabled by a chest wound—a bloody beginning of a service which placed it fifth in the number of its battle losses in the entire Federal army. What happened to Holmes after Antietam has been immortalized by his father in that touching paper, "The Hunt After the Captain," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. It was characteristic of their breed and class that when that agonizing search for the wounded son was ended, they met with a mere "hello" and complete Anglo-Saxon concealment of their real feelings. But excellent as the Justice's military record was, he never boasted of it, nor did *he* ever exploit it, which makes it the more remarkable that the army has seized the opportunity to give a military funeral to one who doffed his uniform seventy years ago and made his great reputation in the halls of justice.

All in all if there was a man better entitled to be called the foremost American I cannot name him. No, I have not overlooked the President—not by any means. But there is no citizen of longer public service, or with a more spotless record. There was a robust virtue, a fortitude, in Oliver Wendell Holmes to suggest the best of the Romans. He was a true patriot in the finest sense of the word.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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A Cartoon by LOW

THE LEAGUE ? PAH! THE LEAGUE IS CONTEMPTIBLE!
THE LEAGUE CAN DO NOTHING!
MAP OF THE WESTERN FRONT
BUT AREN'T YOU THE LEAGUE ?
RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF ABYSSINIA
Western Civilization
LOW

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The Build-up of Long and Coughlin

Washington, March 11

THE excommunication of Huey Long and Father Coughlin has turned into a demonstration of political feeble-mindedness. General Hugh Johnson, a discredited man, was set up to finish off the Kingfish and the radio priest merely because he fires a sixteen-inch mouth. The General did a marvelous job with his verbal ammunition. He overjoyed everyone capable of delight in picturesque language. And when he had finished, he had built up for Huey Long the largest radio audience in his career—nearly a "Presidential" audience in size—which Huey, who is no fool, used not for vituperation but for a presentation of his wealth-sharing program. Worse than that, the General performed the miracle of combining an excommunication with a public wedding. He joined in holy matrimony the Long and Coughlin movements, which had only reached the stage of flirtation. Every Long adherent henceforth will feel in alliance with every Coughlinite, and every Coughlinite will recognize affinity with the subjects of the Kingfish. The marriage may have lain in the stars, but it did not need to be consummated before its day by friends of the President. Johnson on the air and Robinson and McKellar in the Senate have behaved as though politics were like a club, which can throw out members who do not behave like gentlemen. And like clubs, they made themselves ridiculous in doing so. The Senate in which Boies Penrose was so utterly at home, and the Administration in which Mr. Farley is a Cabinet minister (he now is slated to be Governor of New York) become hilariously funny when they take exception to the vulgarities of Huey Long.

One may have sympathy with the Administration in its irritation over Senator Long. What cannot be condoned is its strategy. Presumably Messrs. Johnson, Robinson, and McKellar are "grasping the nettle." But they are ignorant of economic botany. Huey Long is not the nettle, he is only a person, and his importance does not lie in his personality, but in the response of people to his appeal. The nettle to be grasped is the maldistribution of economic power in America. It is the economic condition in which dividends rise and wages fall. It is the prospect of long years of misery at depressed wages. This is a nettle which General Hugh Johnson cannot grasp because he does not know it is a nettle. Senators Robinson and McKellar have been blind to it throughout their senatorial careers. It is a nettle which some of the President's speech-writers once saw and promised to grasp, but the President is not using them any more.

Huey Long and Father Coughlin, as the result of the past ten days of stupidity, are now designated to be the leaders of protesting America. Three months ago one would have considered it impossible that so soon Huey Long would be getting a solid page in the *Herald Tribune* and a national hook-up of every station on the NBC. His ride to prominence has been a mad gallop. Father Coughlin's importance is not so much of a surprise since the World Court vote, and the White House may not be quite happy over his castigation by the General, for one hears that it tried to censor the Coughlin part of the speech. But the two of them now have the millions safely behind them. Huey Long boasted the other day that already he could carry New York City. It may not be a foolish boast. With Father Coughlin's support and with the appeal of his own radio speeches Huey has prestige in Eastern cities where a few weeks ago he was a far-away myth. If anyone questions their combined municipal strength, let him study the results of the plebiscite recently held in Philadelphia by the Columbia station WCAU. The station management had to decide whether to put on the New York Philharmonic or Father Coughlin in the three-o'clock Sunday afternoon hour. On four successive nights it asked its listeners to report their preference. By Saturday noon, when the voting closed, the station had received 117,000 letters. Father Coughlin was the choice of 110,000 and the Philharmonic of 7,000. After the voting closed, a further 82,000 letters were received, 77,000 for Father Coughlin and 5,000 for the Philharmonic. In all, the vote was better than fifteen to one for Father Coughlin. Against this result it can be noted that the announcement of the plebiscite was made each evening at eleven o'clock, when most music lovers do not listen to their radios. A Philharmonic lover is not necessarily political. But the vote paints the portrait of a radio audience, hence of municipal society as it is. And Father Coughlin and Huey Long know better what it is like than, for instance, General Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt. Between them these arch-demagogues combine city unrest with the unrest of Southern farmers and the lower middle class of the Middle West, and indeed with unrest wherever it exists beneath the $2,000 income level—which is pretty much everywhere. And whatever else is to be said of the Philadelphia district, it preferred yesterday hearing Father Coughlin on the reconstruction of society to the somber loveliness of Brahms's German Requiem, a token of political vitality if not of culture.

The sudden importance of Long and Coughlin calls for appraisal in terms of the advance toward fascism which it represents. Long is not yet a fascist in his thinking, while Coughlin is. But the Louisiana dictator is fully as fascist in his type and in the nature of his appeal as Hitler was, say, before 1930. If the American liberals consider these two "safe" because they are radical, it is because of the queer notion widely held that European fascism is reactionary. The neat explanation that the Nazis were merely the bribed thugs of Thyssen may be welcome to people who are afraid to look the German revolution in the face, and who think all the evils in life can be ascribed to foul conspiracy. Fascism began in Germany as a radical movement. Hitler, if anything, was more radical than either Long or Coughlin. He denounced the capitalists, promised to abolish interest, nationalize industry, and seize land without compensation. Mussolini's fascist movement grew from a branch of the Socialist Party, and he broadened its base to include the peasants and middle class because he had the sense to see that he must raise the banner of national unity. If we had had a Socialist labor movement the doctrines of both Long and Coughlin would be still more radical. And the only reason I can see for denying they are potential fascists is that for

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this stage in a fascist development they are too conservative, and not the other way around. To me their mildness makes their fascist nature much clearer in the light of European experience. Their programs, for all their glamorous radical sound, are capitalist radicalism. That is, they are built four-square on the profit motive and the rights of private property. If an election draws near in which they are seen to have a fair chance of success, big business will have commerce with them, as did the German industrialists with the radical Hitler, and the Italian industrialists with the Socialist Mussolini. Big business will not like it, but it will know that cooperation is the only way to buy off heavy penalties after a revolution. Huey Long has already had a fruitful experience of alliance with the corporations he fights in Louisiana. And Father Coughlin's labor doctrines will endear him to big employers once they get over the hindrance of considering him a crackpot. The precedent in Europe was not that big business embraced fascism outright; it first helped it financially as a speculative investment, then went into coalition with it hoping to control it. Mussolini came into office with industrialists, Catholics, and liberals; Hitler with industrialists and conservatives. And if we are in the first stage of fascism, as we seem to be, with our romancing demagogues, our weakening government, our growing unrest, and the stabilization of our depressed living standard, a future phase would be the coalition of the Long-Coughlin elements with conservatives. Simply because fascism in Europe has a regalia which so far it lacks here, the assumption is that America is not disposed to be fascist. But young men in uniforms, marching and drilling and camping, are not fascism. And nothing is more vulnerable than the bland assumption that America is "different," and will not go fascist because it is America. In this country fascism undoubtedly would look different from parallel movements in Europe. But in essence it would be the same. For fascism is the reorganization of society by undemocratic means to maintain the capitalist system. It is a movement, first of all, of passion and prejudice, growing out of the despair of disillusioned, impoverished people. It then is the coalition between the demagogues, who have whipped up the passion, and big business, which goes into it on the defensive. And finally it is the attempt to solve the social conflict, which democracy had failed to resolve, through the technique of dictatorship. Long and Coughlin already lead movements of passion and prejudice, without for a moment transcending the confines of capitalism.

Now they have been helped in the first stage by the utter failure of Washington to understand obvious portents. And they will be helped, too, by an accretion of muddle-headed liberals, who fail to see the graph of fascism as it has been clearly drawn in Italy and Germany. Huey Long is making many friends in the Senate, winning them by his skill as a strategist and his acumen in picking popular issues. He has become a national figure. Nothing can stop him now except the one likelihood he himself mentions on every possible occasion—that Roosevelt will keep his promises. He will not be stopped by the Administration falling into the depths of mental indolence and treating him and Father Coughlin as persons and not as personifications of the discontent in the country.

R. G. S.

Moscow Is a Dynamo

By LOUIS FISCHER

THE capital of any country is important. But Moscow is a thousand times more important to the Soviet Union than London to England, or Paris to France, or Washington and New York to the United States. Moscow is heart, brain, and purse. Moscow is master, father, teacher. A business enterprise in Manchester or in Chicago or in Lyons may have an agent or two in the capital of its respective country, pay taxes to the federal government, and that is all. But Moscow builds, operates, finances, and controls every big and even every relatively small factory, railroad, bank, mine, scientific institute, and oil field in that vast country which covers one-sixth of the earth's surface.

Not only do the army, the taxes, the foreign affairs, the post office—that is, what usually goes as "government"—center in Moscow; every economic unit, social organization, cultural enterprise, and political office has a life-line which connects it with Moscow. Moscow is the heart which pumps blood, the brain which sends messages, the dynamo which lends energy to every corner of the Soviet continent. In its turn, the body keeps the heart alive, enriches the brain, and replenishes the dynamo.

Moscow throbs. Human electricity tingles in the streets. Moscow's tempo is racing, staccato, mad.

Green and yellow trolleys, red and yellow trolleys, green buses, yellow and red buses, giant green trolley buses. Crowds at stops, crowds in the trolleys, crowds in the buses. Young women driving trolleys. Sleeping heads on trolley window sills. Reckless driving around curves. Little traffic but much danger. Much more traffic each year. An empty taxi races by. Some hopeful Muscovites raise their hands to stop it. No use. And when it is standing still: "Are you free?" "Where do you want to go?" "To such-and-such a street." "I have no gas"; or "I must go to the garage"; or "This is my lunch hour." You entreat, offer an extra tip. Your child is sick. You will be late for an important conference. He shakes his head. "I am going the other way," repeats the adamant chauffeur. At night these counter-revolutionaries collect outside the better restaurants waiting for gay couples or drunks. No ordinary passenger can entice them to leave such a post. "Engaged." Engaged to the hope of a good fare.

Numerous trucks of Soviet and foreign manufacture. Will Rogers, the American sociologist who visited Russia recently, said: "When there are more trucks than touring cars in a city it's a good sign." He accorded Moscow the best sign. But no truck driver would ever allow a passenger car to pass him. His truck-driver pride would suffer. All Muscovites have a lucky star in heaven. If they did not, they would be dead. What though felt-helmeted militiamen in white gloves execute right turns and left turns and bend

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their arms in the manner of Balieff's wooden soldiers? What though red-yellow-green semaphores, hand-operated and automatic, guard the street crossings? There are long distances between crossings where the big "30's" on the speed-limit discs remind the driver that it is beneath his dignity to travel at less than thirty kilometers an hour. The street cars join in the race. In trains of two or, more often, three trolleys the motormen rush fiercely forward, sounding their electric alarm bell uninterruptedly. The cars sway and roll; the wheels roar. The passengers hold their seats or their straps, and their breath. The pavements are narrow. Pedestrians overflow into the streets; the speeding vehicles dash in and out among them. Besides, Muscovites have bad ears, and the automobile honk usually reaches their auditory nerves when the tires are three feet from their heels. Then they scatter like geese. Along the whole length of one trolley runs a wooden sign, "Tezhe Cream to Make the Hands Soft"—in the capital of the horny-handed proletariat. It is the Soviet government which manufactures that cream. It also manufactures needles, lead pencils, button hooks, underwear, tennis balls, everything. And sells everything. There is not a single private store in Moscow; all are owned and operated by the community.

Young boys whisper to you as you pass. They hold paper cigarette boxes in their hands. You may buy one cigarette or four or the entire lot. Which means that there are not enough cigarettes. Women carrying market nets bulging at the bottom, carrying baskets, carrying bread which is naked on account of the scarcity of paper; a woman holding a large dripping carp. Men carrying leather portfolios. This is the badge of the official's tribe, and even if the brief case contains nothing more in the morning than a single sandwich for a quick lunch and in the evening the empty bag in which it had been wrapped, a portfolio is his inseparable encumbrance. Through a window, women shaving men, women spraying water on men's faces, women combing men's sparse hair. Is it any queerer than women manicuring men's fingers? The male barbers are building steel mills. "Six-Month Permanents," reads the tonsorial-parlor sign. "For Jesus's sake, give me a kopek," a peasant woman begs. A shoe store. Galoshes, baby galoshes, badly finished shoes, rubber-soled shoes (70 per cent of all Soviet shoes were rubber-soled in 1934 because peasants slaughtered their cattle needlessly in 1932), women's felt overshoes, knee-high felt boots which the city has borrowed from the village, and a black-and-white placard which explains how shoes can be made to last longer. Nearby a shoe-repair shop displays the same rules. Apparently it wants less business.

"Dancing in the Foyer," reads the electric sign. Above it a much bigger moving electric sign announces the name of the cinema. "Jazz in the Foyer," shivers a Neon light in front of another film house. Inside the spectators waiting for the picture to end—nobody is admitted while the film is reeled off—sit in their hats and overcoats listening to a big orchestra play the latest American, German, and British "hits." In a second room citizens with a penchant for calmer entertainment play chess and checkers or read magazines borrowed from the free kiosk. Slogans by Stalin and Lenin serve as decorations. This cinema stands in the central Theater Square, now Sverdlov Square. In the same square are the Big Theater, or Opera House, the Little Theater, and the Second Art Theater, and also a corner of Moscow's biggest department store, Mostorg, whose radio announcer's voice telling where and what to buy overflows into the street. Hunter's Row—the name is an anachronism. One side of this wide avenue radiating from Theater Square consisted formerly of one-story shops selling game, meat, and vegetables. The pavements used to be packed as tightly as a Moscow street car with sellers and buyers. Now the whole block is occupied by the twelve-story, marble-faced hotel of the Moscow Soviet. Opposite were a church, fish stores, little huts, and the like. Now almost the entire block is a new skyscraping office building.

Moscow has 2,500 streets and 51,000 dwellings. Of these, says Lazar Kaganovich, the city's Harun-al-Rashid, 23,000 are one-story and 21,000 two-story buildings. Today he boasts, they are building new six-, seven-, and eight-story homes. This is very nice. But there are some other figures. Only 1,178 houses in Moscow have elevators, or "lifts" as the Russians say, borrowing from the English. And of these 1,178 lifts, only 475 are working. I live in an eight-story building. There is a shaft for a lift but no lift. Occupants of the upper floors are not to be envied, especially when they are women carrying heavy baskets of food. Moreover, what is higher is not always better. There is a sketch, published by a Soviet organization, showing the Eiffel Tower, the Chrysler Building, the Empire State Building, and the plan of Moscow's Palace of Soviets—and proudly indicating that the palace will exceed the height of the Empire State Building by the length of the fingers of Lenin's upstretched hand. The comedians laughed at Mr. Chrysler for mounting a thin spire on his skyscraper to increase its official stature; they poked fun at Al Smith for equally puerile behavior. And now the Palace of Soviets, with one assembly hall for 16,000 auditors and another for 8,000, and nobody knows how many offices, clubrooms, and so on, spoils its classic lines with a huge statue of the dead leader which promises to be the outstanding Bolshevik abomination.

The Bolsheviks worship the big. They have taken over this frailty from the Czarist Russians and, needless to say, surpassed them. In the Kremlin the Czars placed the "Czar cannon," the biggest in the realm, and also the "Czar bell," which broke under its excessive weight. "Is it bigger than the Place de la Concorde?" the Kharkovites asked when they laid out their parade square in front of a modern office skyscraper. "We are erecting an eighteen-story building," the go-getters of Rostov dinned. "Will there be enough water pressure for the upper floors? Could your fire department cope with a fire in the upper floors?" They had not thought of that. Skyscrapers, yes, where land is costlier than air. But where land has no price because it can neither be bought nor sold? Moscow has many blocks of multi-story gray barracks which are comfortable enough within but cannot possibly be a foretaste of the Socialist metropolis of the future. In many respects the Bolsheviks are children, just like many adult Americans. This is one of several reasons why Americans are usually better equipped to understand Soviet Russia than other nationals.

The Russians love a show and the Bolsheviks know how to put one on. The Bolsheviks are endeavoring to change the core of life but they pay much attention to outward appearances. They have decided to make Moscow "the city beautiful," and nothing must interfere with that goal. The Palace of Soviets probably will, but it is the

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biggest feature of their plan. In the courtyard of the house where I live an additional wing was started, the foundation was built, piles of bricks were brought to the scene. Building operations, however, have stopped on account of the lack of workingmen. Home building at the Frezer factory just outside Moscow has ceased because of the absence of materials, and the brick walls with yawning holes for windows stand there like gaunt skeletons while workers live in the barracks nearby. These are two instances of many. Yet the palace, which might have been started five years from today without anybody missing it, absorbs countless numbers of laborers and infinite quantities of material.

This is true. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks are not interested in façades. In Warsaw, Madrid, Athens, even in some French and British cities, one need only walk ten minutes from the fashionable streets of the metropolitan hub to be in dirty slums. But the Soviet revolution mixed things up completely. Workers live in the aristocratic quarters. Sometimes the best houses are erected in the factory suburbs. Walk ten or twenty or thirty minutes in one direction from the Nevski in Leningrad, from the Tverskaya in Moscow, from the Kreschatik in Kiev, and you do not fall down any social precipice. In fact, you may have some climbing to do on such a promenade. If the central streets of Moscow are all asphalted or being asphalted, so too are distant wards. Stores an hour away from the Big Theater may be better supplied than stores around the corner from it.

Appearances count but principles are not always sacrificed to them. The Moscow Soviet could round up the beggars of the city just as easily as Mussolini is said to have done. That would be window dressing. Instead, the regime goes about improving living conditions. When the peasants are really well-to-do, Soviet cities will know no beggars except the professionals, who can then be reeducated. This is the attitude toward prostitution, too. Where there is no unemployment and a lot of amateur competition, there are few street-walkers. Moscow, with tens of thousands of transients and a garrison, has only a few hundred, perhaps five hundred, prostitutes. Most of them are housemaids in search of careers or peasant girls who came in to find work and were intercepted at railway stations by adventurers. Soviet cities have prophylactoriums where such girls are segregated and taught professions.

A hatless girl in rubber tennis slippers and a silk dress down to her ankles. A young workingman with a girl's blue knitted cap on the top of his head. A woman stops a man on the street for a light. He draws on the cigarette, gives her the light, tips his hat, and walks on. A queue forty people long at a newspaper kiosk waiting for the *Evening Moscow*. Its circulation is 120,000, but if the state gave it enough paper it could sell 500,000 copies. The only evening paper in a city of 3,600,000! A queue of twelve people at the bus stop. The bus will probably arrive full and not take on a single passenger. When I first came to Moscow in 1922, there was not one bus or taxi. That day in 1924 when eight handsome Leylands arrived from England was a holiday. By 1928 Moscow had 175 buses, all foreign. Now it has 180 Soviet buses too. The transportation problem, however, remains unsolved. The first twelve-kilometer line of the subway or "Metro" solves part of it. But the complete subway, eighty kilometers in length, will not be ready until 1942. Then the Moscow trolley system will be abolished as superfluous. Happy day! No more waiting twenty minutes at wind-swept car stops when the temperature is thirty-five below zero and then traveling in a trolley whose only heat is human heat.

A girl with high-heeled leather shoes inlaid with snake skin, a crepe-de-chine dress in the latest fashion, kid gloves extending over her cuffs, and a cloth beret cocked at the regulation Paris angle of thirty-one and a half degrees. A woman with epaulette shoulders on her dress. A woman whose clothes, coiffure, facial make-up, and manner reveal a painstaking effort to ape the Western world. Feminine clothes are an intimate thing and the revolution has not changed them. Most Soviet women would walk much more than a mile for a foreign fashion magazine; "foreign" is still a synonym for good. The revolution has altered much, but not women's styles. And men? When there were no collars, neckties, or felt hats, it was "counter-revolutionary" to wear them. But now that they exist in abundance, President Kalinin, Premier Molotov, and Comrade Kosarev, secretary of the Komsomol or Young Communist League, have themselves photographed in these "bourgeois" trappings. And Ordjonikidze, Commissar of Heavy Industry, told his engineers in October, 1934—historic date—to shave regularly. Shades of Peter the Great!

A broad boulevard extends down the center of a long and broader avenue. Children play in sand boxes while their nursemaids watch and gossip. Old men play checkers on a bench. There is a crowd around another bench. A young, heavy-handed artist is making a crayon sketch of a workingman who poses with serious mien. "Know Your Real Weight." A bag registers the force of your punch. Ice-cream kiosks, mineral-water kiosks, kiosks where you buy geranium pots, chrysanthemum pots, aster pots, all decorated with pink and purple ribbons made of thin and wide wood shavings. In the evening there will be free "propaganda movies" on the small screen under the trees of the boulevard. Sandwich and beer kiosks, a shoe-shining and shoe-lace kiosk, newspaper kiosks where, if one is lucky, Moscow's numerous dailies can be bought, where, if one is interested, one can get the radio magazine, the inventors' magazine, a crude fashion magazine, a sports' magazine, political magazines, a woman's magazine, a children's magazine—all printed on bad paper but all eagerly read.

Take a bus or trolley bus at Theater Square and travel fifteen minutes, then walk ten minutes through Petrovsky Park—you are in the midst of quiet village life where even the people are different. Here you find the old traditional Russian mujik type, the bearded giant, the little grandmother. But the city, the multi-story tenement and the factory, the paved road and the telephone wire are quickly invading these islands of repose. Moscow is throwing out tentacles and seizing its dozing countryside neighbors. Moscow's mad tempo is infecting the surrounding village area. A few years ago a sprawling village itself, Moscow is now urbanizing its periphery. In this respect Moscow is merely an example in miniature of the vast process that has gripped the entire Soviet continent: the gap between the urban and the rural is being narrowed. The Bolsheviks aim to close the gap altogether.

[*This article is a chapter from Mr. Fischer's forthcoming book, "Soviet Journey," which will be published March 25.*]

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Grand Coulee

By JAMES RORTY

Seattle, Washington

THE Grand Coulee dam, now being built across a bend of the Columbia River in northeastern Washington and designed both to produce cheap power and to irrigate 1,200,000 acres of arid land in the Columbia Basin, is the largest public-works project undertaken by the Roosevelt Administration. The low dam now being built will cost $63,000,000 and will yield power only. The projected high dam, with 2,647,000 installed horse-power, more than Boulder Dam and three times as much as Muscle Shoals, will cost $179,000,000. It will represent the greatest power development known to be feasible in the United States and will supply water for the Columbia Basin irrigation project. This will cost an additional $214,000,000, making a total of $393,000,000.

It would seem clear that the nature and scope of the project imply a functional, socialized, national planning of power, land, and water resources and of population distribution. That the President saw Grand Coulee in this perspective is evident from the speech he delivered at the dam site last summer:

> I know that this country is going to be filled with the homes not only of a great many people from this state, but of a great many families from other states of the Union; men, women, and children who will be making an honest livelihood and doing their best to live up to the American standard of living and the American standard of citizenship.

It was the President, not Huey Long, who said that. When he said it, did he know what was actually happening at Grand Coulee? Secretary Ickes knows, because last summer his office sent a representative to investigate the systematic buying up of land around the dam site and in the Columbia Basin, prior to condemnation, and the possible connection of these land speculators with the political bloc, led by ex-Senator Dill, which put Grand Coulee over. Superintendent J. D. Ross, of Seattle's City Light, knows that it was the Grand Coulee crowd, the Inland Empire crowd, that blocked him when he asked in vain for PWA money to complete the Skagit River development—a project so sound, so clearly "self-liquidating," that when he was turned down by Secretary Ickes and the President he went to Wall Street and got his money, or part of it, at excellent commercial rates. The farmers, townspeople, and small-time realtors of the Columbia Basin either know what it is all about, or else they do Senator Dill a grave injustice when they assure you that the former statesman has sunk all his considerable fortune in the desert which PWA money is expected to make bloom like the rose.

Grand Coulee is magnificent. One readily admits the grandiose conceptual beauty of the project, its demonstrated engineering feasibility, and the rich yield of cheap power and fertile irrigated land which its completion will add to our national resources. But don't call it planning. That dream is for some undetermined future. The present dream is something different. It is the older American dream of unearned increment, the dream that swept across the continent during the long century of westward expansion, slaughtering the forests, raping our resources of coal, oil, and water power, building railroads and boom towns, piling interest and rent burdens on farmers and townspeople alike—in short, the dream of selfish conquest and aggrandizement, not the dream of planning.

Grand Coulee is a monument built in the dusk of our transition from the older pattern of competitive aggrandizement, in which government is the tool of predatory groups, to the emerging pattern of regulated exploitation under state capitalism or fascism. Naturally, the transition is loud with conflict. But the struggle has little to do with planning for the future. It is merely the old fight about who gets what.

Have you ever seen the American Dream walking? Well, I have. I saw it walking up the side of the Columbia River canyon, scribbling its puny etchings of squalor and cupidity against an austere backdrop of leaning cliffs and sudden chasms, and crooning the old American theme songs of Get Rich Quick and Something for Nothing. The dream is a town. It calls itself Grand Coulee; it is built of faith, hope, barn siding, and paper board; when I was there it was inhabited by about 1,500 people. It had twenty eating places, as many saloons, at least a half-dozen wide-open brothels, five grocery stores, two jewelry stores, a furniture store, two drugstores, two ladies' wear shoppes, three beauty shoppes, a proportionate quota of painless dentists and radio-repair shops, and six real-estate agents.

Grand Coulee was a foot deep in mud when I was there, and the ladies from the sporting houses went in up to their ankles in getting to the beauty shoppes. But the 2,500 womanless males working on the dam provided good business; hence they were cheerful and philosophic—the New Pioneers. So were the realtors. "Buy at the fringe and wait," said John Jacob Astor. Believe it or not, this slogan was selling house lots and business sites in Grand Coulee as fast as the notaries could stamp the papers. In a few weeks' time a corner lot 120 feet deep changed hands six times, and the final owner refused $2,250. This for a microscopic piece of desert gumbo which sold at around a dollar an acre three years ago and which, there being no logical reason to prevent it, will probably be reclaimed by the sagebrush, the rattlesnakes, and the jackrabbits four or five years from now when the dam is completed.

I cornered one of the realtors and asked him to explain the miracle. Buy at the fringe? The fringe of what? Whose fringe? Whose $63,000,000 to $393,000,000 was being spent? What for and whom for? Who owned this land and how had they got hold of it? What will this huge expenditure of government funds net the consumers who need cheap power, the 40,000 farmers who are expected sometime to make the wind-drifted desert of the Columbia Basin into a modern Eden, the 120,000,000 people whom government is supposed to represent, and whose economic

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and social condition must be improved if this project is to make sense? The realtor was realistic, informed, and chatty. Calming my indignation, he proceeded to tell me the Facts of Life as he understood them.

Before 1905 the country around the dam site, and including the Columbia Basin as far south as Pasco, was grazing land. During the years immediately following, the country filled up with homesteaders. In 1911 there came a wave of land speculation. Settlers were brought in from the East and Middle West and told they could grow wheat. Some of them did—as much as twenty bushels to the acre on the better land, and as long as there was rain. I talked to an old timer near Quincy who had been through this boom and its subsequent deflation by the combined forces of nature, ever more niggardly with rain, and the erosion of mortgage interest based on inflated land values. In the twenties the wind began to blow the soil away from the roots of the bunch grass. It was pitiful to see, he said, and it was pitiful to hear the cattle searching for fodder; they used to come down from the high country by themselves in great herds, but now if they came, they found little winter pasture left.

Pitiful, too, was the cycle of exploitation as my realtor friend recited it. He had sold his old homestead in the basin at the top of the boom for $50 an acre. Recently he had bought it back at $1.25 an acre. When the boom broke, much of the land went back to the mortgage companies, and thousands of acres became tax delinquent. The wheat farmers departed, their shacks and barns crumbled back into sagebrush, and the landscape resumed its level plane. In 1928 a law was put through the state legislature enabling the counties to sell tax-delinquent land for 20 per cent of the accumulated taxes, the remainder to be paid over a period of ten years. At this point the land went back into the hands of the big speculators, and incidentally it was in this year that Senator Dill was elected with the support of the Inland Empire group, headed by the Spokane and Eastern Trust Company, which had for years been promoting the Columbia Basin project.

The successive steps of the exploitative cycle are as follows:

1. The homesteader goes broke and the bank or mortgage company forecloses him.
2. The mortgage company can't sell the land. It too goes broke and the land becomes tax delinquent.
3. The county takes it over and sells it, on the terms already described, to the big speculators.
4. The big speculators wholesale the land to the small speculators, who in turn sell it to a new crop of settlers.

When I was in Grand Coulee several land companies were selling tracts of from ten to forty acres, both around the dam site and in the basin, at from $12.50 to $17.50 an acre. One realtor estimated that about 50 per cent of the land affected by the irrigation project was still in the hands of the earlier settlers. But it was being picked up fast, and the picture I obtained later of land ownership in the basin indicated that speculators had more than 50 per cent of it.

According to the plan, some 1,200,000 acres will ultimately be irrigated by water pumped from the Columbia River into the Grand Coulee, a big natural trough which will be plugged by smaller dams at both ends. And according to the records of Grant, Adams, Lincoln, Franklin, and Douglas counties about 670,000 acres of land either definitely included in the project or benefited by it are held by banks, railways, utilities, investment bankers, insurance companies, and real-estate companies—interests concerned not with the use of land but with selling it at a profit. Among these interests are the Spokane and Eastern Trust Company, the Northwest Pacific Hypothek Bank, the Realty Mortgage Company, the North Pacific Mortgage Company, the Columbia Irrigated Lands Company, the Columbia Basin Land Company, Columbia Land Owners Incorporated, the Columbia Valley Reclamation Company, the Columbia Highland Company, the Northern Pacific Railway, the Title and Trust Company of Portland, Oregon, the Big Bend Land Company, the Inland Empire Land Company, the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, the McMaster Ireland Company, the Columbia Basin Development Company. The preceding is only a partial list, nor is there space to present the tangle of holding companies and interlocking directorates which hold the threads of ownership. It is equally impossible to place responsibility upon the persons involved in this melee of speculative buying and selling. Such activity is entirely legitimate anyway. There is no law against buying land cheap and selling it dear.

Carping critics, their noses out of joint because the Inland Empire crowd is riding high at the moment, have demurred at the activities of close political associates of Senator Dill in acquiring land in the Columbia Basin, naming specifically Frank Funkhauser, a former secretary of the Senator, and Frank T. Bell, another former secretary, now United States Fisheries Commissioner. But Mr. Bell is a Grant County boy and 9,000 acres of land is relatively only a small holding; anyway, he and Mr. Funkhauser are just as legitimately in the real-estate business as anybody else. As Thorstein Veblen would say, these and other persons who were active in putting over the Grand Coulee project and incidentally stand to make money out of it, years in advance of its completion, are quite blameless. They are well within the pattern of business for profit, which the President has repeatedly approved.

There is also, of course, the little matter of the $10,000,000-a-year salmon industry of the Columbia River. Not even the dodo is as extinct as the Columbia salmon industry will be in a few years, according to Thomas A. E. Lally, chairman of the Washington state game commission. And in its issue of December 15, 1934, the *Astorian Budget* (Astoria, Oregon) remarked editorially:

> The proposal of the regional planning conference with respect to the dam across the Columbia at Grand Coulee to run the project into one of reclamation and irrigation rather than a low-dam power project indicates another threat to the much-attacked salmon industry. If the fish do manage to pass above Bonneville on their way to spawning grounds, Grand Coulee will surely shut them off from the high reaches of the river, particularly if a high dam is constructed, for the difficulty and expense of building adequate fishways in connection with such a structure are almost insurmountable. . . . In fact, with power sources not needed and land development apparently unwise, there is apparently no reason at all for Grand Coulee except to give someone a job.

This is of course a partisan view of the matter, but it raises a number of further questions. The Bonneville

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dam, now being built forty miles east of Portland at a cost of $32,000,000, will have an ultimate power capacity of 430,000 kilowatts—enough to serve that part of the country in any predictable future; it will also open up navigation to The Dalles, 147 miles from the ocean. It may destroy the salmon industry and it may not, depending upon the success of the fish ladders. If the high dam at Grand Coulee is built, then, in the opinion of experts, the salmon industry will be practically ruined. If the high dam is not built, then the Columbia Basin reclamation project goes by the board, the patriots of the Inland Empire are left high and dry, and my realtor friend at Grand Coulee is taking money from innocents. In that case we shall have a $63,000,000 dam generating 700,000 horse-power of electrical energy in the middle of a desert about 250 miles from the centers of industry and population, which are on the other side of the Cascades. Moreover, the present and future power needs of the West Coast, in the judgment of qualified experts, can most economically be supplied by the extension of City Light's Skagit River development.

So the low dam at Grand Coulee doesn't make sense. And the high dam makes sense only if the salmon can be persuaded to travel up other rivers, and if the huge output of power can be sold so as to pay the cost of the dam and half the cost of the irrigation project, and if the federal or state government condemns the irrigable land and puts it in the hands of actual farmers at prices low enough to make practicable a self-sustaining agricultural economy, and if the national economy is sufficiently rehabilitated to make a market for the increased production of agricultural products.

In justice to the patriots of the Inland Empire—some of them, by the way, appear to have abstained from speculation and to have worked disinterestedly for years in behalf of the Grand Coulee project—it should be said that government condemnation and sale of the reclaimed land at fair prices are part of the official plan. The state planning commission will present a bill to the legislature forbidding all platting without the consent of the commission. The Columbia Basin Commission will present a bill authorizing the state to condemn all land in the basin at present values, also a bill ordering the counties to reserve all tax-delinquent land within the project area.

What is meant by "present values"? The speculative build-up has been under way since 1928. When the land companies at Grand Coulee are selling land—most of it bought for resale—at from $12.50 to $17.50 an acre, what is the meaning of the statement, found in the promotion literature issued by the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, that land will be available to settlers at from $5 to $15 an acre? And in any case, why weren't condemnation proceedings initiated early and why weren't they based on the $1.25-an-acre price at which my realtor friend bought back his old homestead?

But maybe that wasn't the idea. Maybe the idea was to create a new frontier, an artificially made, publicly financed block of exploitable resources so that the American Dream of Get Rich Quick and Something for Nothing might be dreamed all over again. In that case it is proper to remark that the American Dream is obsolete; that there is nothing in it any more except headaches, ultimately, for everybody.

In the Driftway

THE Drifter would like publicly to announce that he is getting pretty tired of the blizzard of 1888. This famous storm, the survivors of which—not one of them under seventy—met at their annual luncheon the other day, has been gone into thoroughly to the accompaniment of every sort of panegyric. Trains stopped for it, hotels burst their buttons trying to accommodate the commuters marooned in town overnight, or maybe over two nights, drifts were forty or fifty feet high, snow men grew spontaneously in the streets, and the main avenues were not cleared for the horse cars until the evening of the Fourth of July, when patriotic bonfires caused the last snowdrift to give up its tarnished ghost. In short, New York had quite a snowstorm forty-seven years ago, and in the minds of the eyewitnesses it has not snowed since.

* * * * *

NOW that spring is practically here (as we write; there is no telling where it will be when we are read), we may as well review the blizzard situation and perhaps bury it without further obsequies. In January, 1935, there was a snowfall of some seventeen-odd inches, about three less than the fall of 1888. It is true that what was said to be snow and ice, though of an ominous dark color and worse consistency, remained horribly upon the New York streets for a month or more. But there was no appreciable stoppage of traffic, and the Drifter has heard of few cases in which city toilers had to stay home because of the snow or, once at their places of employment, were compelled to remain there a moment after the regular end of the working day. He did hear of a farmhouse sixty miles from the metropolis whose inhabitants were just saved from starvation by gifts of food dropped from the sky, or to be more precise, from a ministering airplane. And certain railroads, despite the lavish sums they had spent on snowplows, sent their trains tagging into the stations several hours late. But although the newspapers did their best to make a big story out of the storm, it seemed obvious that a foot and a half of snow in twenty-four hours does not, any more, turn New York City into a howling wilderness. If, indeed, it ever did!

* * * * *

THIS last is probably the rub. The Drifter is plain incredulous of the blizzard of 1888. Not having seen it himself, he takes with the usual grain of salt the tall stories about it that appear periodically in the public prints. He knows very well that if he had been in New York City on March 12, 1888, his own tales would have been surpassed by none. He would have lied gloriously about the size of the drifts and the congestion of the streets and the impossibility of moving an inch away from whatever front doorstep he happened to have reached when the snow began. But he would have been aware of the literary quality of his account, and would have taken as much pride in it as Paul Bunyan did, whose Blue Ox, Babe, ate four tons of grain at a single meal, and it took two men to pick the baling wire out of his teeth at meal times. What the Drifter would like to see is for the blizzard company to incorporate themselves as the Sole Survivors of the Blizzard of 1888

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and of Baron Munchausen. Then they could describe their experiences not only with a proper flourish but with a clear conscience. Their difficulty now is that they are trying to tell the truth about what happened to them forty-seven years ago. Any lawyer can offer substantial proof that witnesses are unable truthfully to describe what they saw, heard, or felt last Wednesday, let alone half a century before. As a compromise in this situation, the Drifter suggests accounts of the big snow that fell two months ago. As it happened, he himself was present, and he can testify that the drifts were phenomenal, and that here and there automobiles were inadvertently parked on top of one another, so deep and so hard-packed was the snow. If none of his readers can remember this marvel, he merely advises them to wait. Presently they will recollect the whole thing and will be telling the story themselves. THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

A Father Coughlin Forum

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The hocus-pocus of national affairs has long held my attention, but never before has it come so close to home. Now, right at my door, thunders the magician of the National Union for Social Justice. Almost daily I witness his humble congregation disappear through the door that leads to the now famous Shrine of the Little Flower. The "citadel of social justice," I have heard it called.

Several days ago I wandered into the shrine. Father Coughlin was scheduled to preside over his regular Tuesday evening forum. The meeting begins at eight o'clock. An hour earlier the 700 seats are filled and 300 people are crowded along the walls and in the aisles. A sign prominently displayed reads, "Your donations make broadcasting possible." Ushers collect written questions and pass out membership blanks. Then comes a short prayer, followed by a collection.

Father Coughlin hurries on to the stage. He's been terribly busy, he explains. Senators from all over the country have been calling him to ask advice and to give him information. Oh, yes, he knows them all. The people around me are beaming. What a man!

"News! I have great news!" The crowd stops breathing for a moment. "The Senate refuses to go international!" A wave of applause. An old lady squeals with joy. I hear a "God bless him."

Father Coughlin pushes a finger to the audience. "But," he cries, "our own dear Senators have gone international on us!" Hisses and boos. Groans. "Vandenberg, the man who owes his election to my secretary—he said so in his letter—turned traitor!" The performer is shouting. "Traitor! Internationalist! Wait until he comes back to us for election! I'm off Vandenberg and Couzens from now on, no matter what they do! We'll show them!"

The man leans closer to his listeners. He's going to let them in on some inside dope. "Shipstead called me a short time ago—Shipstead, an old friend of mine, an honest man—to tell me about a signed document in his hands. I'll tell you he has the document but," with a twinkle in his eye, "I cannot tell you how he got it. The document is signed by John W. Davis and Newton Baker, two internationalists, by Wickersham of prohibition fame, and by Colonel House, who is responsible for United States entanglements in European affairs. Do you know what's in this document?" The orator is erect, his arm plunges forward, his fist is clenched, his voice thunders. "It proposes to take away the independence of our fleet! To join our fleet and the British into one! It is the work of the devil and the internationalists."

Rome against internationalism!

Now for the questions. "What is my stand on the child-labor amendment? I am not acquainted with the amendment personally, but I can quote you good authority. Bishop Gallagher advises against the amendment, for under it all children will be thrown under the surveillance of the federal government."

"Why, in the principles of the National Union for Social Justice, is no mention made of freedom of speech, press, and assembly? Oh, yes, Principle Number One amply guarantees these things." He has made short order of my question. I look again at Principle Number One: "I believe in the right of liberty of conscience and liberty of education, not permitting the state to dictate either my worship to my God or my chosen avocation in life." No use. I can't see it there.

"Will the wage-earner suffer under inflation? Inflation is a simple process, and the worker will be amply protected. I propose that if the money in circulation is doubled a law be passed at the same time doubling wages. We must not let the worker starve while those on top . . ." The questioning worker must remain satisfied. How simple our Father makes everything. A great man, indeed!

"Will the N. U. S. J. support unions in Detroit? We cannot dissipate our efforts in local affairs. Our interests are national. But the Union is in favor of unions, though not the kind that we have now. What we should have is a union for all the automobile workers in Michigan, one for all the bakers, and so on . . ." A man jumps up eagerly and asks if the speaker will suggest leaders for an auto workers' union in Michigan. There is a stir. The workers are interested. The Father hesitates. Do the workers really want him to suggest leaders? He has in mind three men who will be true to their interests. "Yes! Yes!" are the cries. The leaders are Mons. John Hunt, the Rev. M. S. Rice, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin. Heaven help the labor movement!

"Huey Long? What do I think of him? He is a much-maligned man. Don't believe all you hear against him. If Roosevelt continues to jump out on his promises we shall see things happen. I shall wait with my tongue in my cheek, but I want to say now that Huey Long is an honest-to-God devotee of social justice."

The meeting is at an end. The Father is called to the telephone. Some Senator is calling. I walk home slowly. The path along which the radio thunderer is traveling is more plainly marked than ever.

Detroit, Mich., February 28 H. M. BERG

Anti-Semitism on the Sea

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Passengers on the Swedish-American liner Kungsholm during a recent cruise from New York to the West Indies encountered a new method of dealing with Jewish travelers. For two years, according to an explanation made by the cruise director to one of the passengers, the line has been faced by a "problem" caused by the fact that many Jews who formerly patronized the German ships have been transferring to the Swedish line.

The method used in meeting this "problem" was not apparent at once to the traveler leaving New York. But he slowly became aware that the Jewish passengers, comprising 25 or 30 per cent of the entire passenger list, had been, with few exceptions, allotted their own section of the dining-room,

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and that to a less obvious extent the same policy of isolation was followed in the allotment of cabins on the two lower decks. The cruise was advertised as a "one-class" affair, and the passengers were almost 100 per cent Americans.

Other steps were taken to shield Gentile passengers from association with Jews. Even in the aquatic sports, conducted by the assistant cruise director, "racial purity" was maintained, Gentiles competing against Gentiles, and Jews against Jews. When remonstrance was made against the un-American and inhospitable spirit shown to many of the Jewish passengers, some of the more flagrant abuses were corrected, but among the passengers, racial hatreds, so easily and needlessly aroused, were slow to cool. The ship proceeded through the placid Southern waters amid an atmosphere of bigotry that made a mockery of the widely advertised spirit of good-fellowship that is claimed for such cruises.

The appearance of anti-Jewish sentiment on cruise liners patronized almost entirely by Americans should be a matter of deep concern for those who are eager to preserve American principles. It would seem to call for prompt action by those who stand ready to repel Hitlerism in any form in which it may attempt to gain a foothold here.

New York, March 12 "TRAVELER"

Social Note

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The Department of Labor has occupied its new mansion. Deep carpets, paneled walls, indirect lighting, a gold, cream, and blue auditorium with fluted pillars. Just like the movies, or a workingman's dream. Light, space, shower baths, warmth, luxury. On February 25 it was full of diplomats, high government officials, and labor leaders in cutaway coats. Miss Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, dedicated the new building. It was, she said, "full of grace, comfort, and efficiency." It symbolized, she continued, "the change that is coming over the lives and homes of working people in this country." A textile worker who was there disguised as a minor attache from Bulgaria tells me that what with plush carpets and upholstered labor leaders the place was so quiet while Miss Perkins was speaking that he could hear wages dropping as far west as Chicago.

Washington, March 1 N. R. A.

Critique

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The critique, if you can call it that, of my performance for the Group Theater, which appeared in your issue of February 27 has been called to my attention—and I am practically, but fortunately not quite, speechless.

The past few seasons have made it evident to me that the less said about dance criticism the better. However, when the critic stoops to the petty, abusive, envious, sneering, supercilious, and would-be superior level adopted by your Mr. Kirstein, it is time a halt was called. I will not speak here of the bias one can naturally allow a devotee of the "ballet," but "She is not hard to look at—once" and "Don't hit the comrade, she is trying" are remarks of a far more personal nature than should be given the privilege of your columns. There is no need for Mr. Kirstein to substitute insulting condescension for his mislaid critical faculty.

New York, March 2 TAMIRIS

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By DR. MILLARD S. EVERETT

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Labor and Industry

Will Rubber Snap?

By LOUIS ADAMIC

Akron, Ohio

THE paramount and perhaps the one incontestable fact in the current extremely critical labor situation in the United States (critical from the point of view of labor) is that the high officials of the American Federation of Labor—William Green and his "colleagues," as he calls them—have done everything in their power during the last year and a half to prevent the emergence of a great mass labor movement in this country, and so far have been very successful in their efforts. A little more than seven months ago I reported in *The Nation* how the A. F. of L. bureaucracy had sabotaged the spontaneous and vigorous, if none too intelligent, rank-and-file movement in the steel industry. A few weeks ago I wrote about the situation in automobiles, where the A. F. of L.'s tactics evidently had also prevented the workers from forming effective unions. This is true in other important industries.

As is well known, the A. F. of L. is basically and essentially an amalgamation of craft or trade unions with the powerful old traditions of "trade unionism pure and simple," while the overwhelming majority of workers in such industries as steel and automobiles cannot be organized except on the broad basis of industrial unionism. During the summer and fall of 1933, after the NIRA had virtually invited labor to organize, workers rushed into all kinds of unions. The big idea was "to get behind the President," then widely reputed to be a friend of labor. Where there were no unions, which was the case in not a few important industries, the workers quickly formed new organizations. These were, for the most part, purely industrial unions organized by plants. Suddenly there was the danger, as it doubtless immediately appeared to the panjandrums of the A. F. of L., that a new labor movement formed along industrial lines would spring up and under the NIRA's sympathetic smile become numerically and otherwise so strong that it would overshadow the old amalgamation, seriously reduce its membership and prestige, or possibly even swallow it up, thus playing the devil with the A. F. of L. officials' high positions. Mr. Green and his side-kicks on the Executive Council had to act quickly to prevent any beginning of a rival organization. To this end they issued charters to hundreds of the new industrial plant unions and called them "federal unions"—most of them were led by rank-and-file men who knew as much about the A. F. of L. bureaucracy as they knew of Mr. Roosevelt and his cavalry general, to say nothing of other shortcomings. These unions, let me emphasize, were taken into the Federation, not to help them, not to use the powerful mass urge behind them to build up a great mass movement, but solely and simply to get them under control and keep them from growing and developing. Some may dispute me when I say that this was a conscious and deliberate policy on the part of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.; no one, however, can deny that this is how things have worked out.

In no industry is this situation clearer than in rubber, whose capital is the otherwise rather pleasant city of Akron, Ohio, home of the great Goodyear, Goodrich, General, India Rubber, and Firestone plants and of more than twenty lesser factories, together employing at peak production 38,500 workers.

In the fall of 1933, when the fame of the NIRA had reached its height, the A. F. of L. rubber unions had about 40,000 members, or approximately half of all the rubber workers in the country. Of these more than 25,000 were in Akron and its suburbs. The others were in the various rubber works in Indianapolis, Detroit, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. The morale of the rubber workers was then higher than ever before or since. Both the morale and the union membership zigzagged downward in 1934 and are reaching new lows as I write this article. The main, indeed, almost the sole important reason for this condition is the American Federation of Labor, or, to be more specific, Coleman C. Claherty, the A. F. of L.'s official rubber "organizer" in Akron.

Mr. Claherty is a former sheet-metal worker who by playing the game has put himself in the good graces of Bill Green and the Executive Council in Washington. For many years he was the walking delegate of a union in Cleveland. For a while, too, he worked for John L. Lewis in the West Virginia coal fields. He is as smooth a specimen of labor "leader" as you would wish to meet. Scholarly and extremely dignified in bearing, speech, and manner, and claiming personal friendship with the president of the A. F. of L., he had for a long time no serious difficulties in manipulating the tragically inexperienced rank-and-filers.

Mr. Claherty appeared in Akron late in 1933 as a personal emissary of Mr. Green. Rubber labor, naively believing, like labor in other industries at the time, that the government was behind it and that the President needed unions to back him in his plan to compel the industrialists to treat labor decently, was militant as never before. Claherty's job ostensibly was to "advise" the leaders of the new unions; actually, he was there to "pack ice on the hot heads" of the militant rank-and-filers, some of whom considered themselves competent labor leaders (but really weren't) because they had been members of miners' organizations in the West Virginia, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania coal fields, whence they had come to Akron after having been frozen out of employment in the declining bituminous industry. During the peak-production period of the late winter and early spring of 1934 the unions and thousands of union members as individuals clamored for action, wanted to organize the industry 100 per cent, and mutinied against their vague and invisible shackles. A great many workers did not join because they feared the employers, who disapproved of unions. The thing to do was to force the companies to recognize the organizations. Then everybody would join. Let's strike! Compel the bosses to recognize the union! A general rubber strike in Akron appeared almost a certainty every few weeks, but Claherty,

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preaching patience and faith in the President while engaging in inter- and intra-union intrigue, prevented it each time.

In January a year ago two hundred rank-and-file leaders, representing nearly every rubber plant and shop in this country and a number in Canada, assembled in a "rump" convention and attempted to form an international amalgamation of rubber unions along industrial lines, but Claherty cleverly smashed the convention and with it the effort to form a great rubber workers' amalgamation, and subsequently succeeded in having the leaders of this movement expelled from their respective federal unions.

In February, 1933, a strike threat at the India Rubber Company plant in a suburb of Akron brought union recognition and small pay increases. Toward the end of the winter other strike stirrings were put down by Claherty's promise to call a "legal" national convention to form an international union with a broad industrial base. Of course Claherty found all sorts of excuses for inaction.

Meanwhile the rank-and-filers, with the seeming approbation of Claherty, drew up a set of demands, which the unions approved, to be presented to the Rubber Manufacturers' Association. The manufacturers refused to receive the workers' delegation. This, on top of all the rest, made a strike imminent in mid-May, but Claherty managed to pack more ice on the hot heads till the fact that the slack season had arrived became apparent to everybody, and a general rubber strike in Akron was unthinkable.

None the less, 1,100 workers of the General Company walked out spontaneously early in June and maintained strong picket lines for six weeks despite the regional labor board's pleas for arbitration, which were seconded by Claherty and additional emissaries of Mr. Green from Washington. The strikers gained a partial victory in spite of the slack season since the other unions vigorously supported the strike both with money and on the picket line.

Wherever possible, Claherty forced out the original rank-and-file leaders and put in their place as local leaders his own henchmen, whom he developed as he went along. In mid-spring the so-called United Rubber Workers' Council was set up, supposedly to create an alliance between the craft unions within the industry in Akron and the actual federal locals, which then comprised about 90 per cent of the rubber workers. Claherty's intention in this move, it now appears, was just the opposite. He didn't want the rank-and-filers to start something similar. He was made president of the council, which was composed of seven members only one of whom was an honest-to-goodness industrial rubber worker. The other six represented crafts in rubber. The sop tossed to the big Akron rubber locals was two ex officio members on the council!

The workers' restlessness continued and grew. The plants speeded up production, until last year, with improved machinery and methods, one worker did the work done by two in 1920 and for approximately the same pay that one received fourteen years ago. Efficiency engineers swarmed about as they still do, instructing everybody how to work harder but not mentioning any increase in pay. (The average rubber wage is between $800 and $1,000 a year, although the company estimates are higher. Hourly rates run between 60 cents and $1, but the long seasonal lay-offs, usually beginning in June, accelerating up to August, and continuing till January, make the annual wage extremely low. Also, some of the tasks in rubber production undermine the worker's health. Tire-builders, for instance, are good for about eight years, after which they are replaced by younger men. The use of sulphur to compound rubber fills the factories with stench and dust.) Mr. Claherty still preached patience.

Last fall, after the membership of the Goodrich local had dropped from 8,000 to less than 4,000, with corresponding declines in other unions, Claherty pressed a fight for elections through the National Labor Relations Board. These were granted for the Firestone and Goodrich locals in December. The Goodyear local, fearing to test its waning numerical strength against the company union, which is sixteen years old, made no request. The Firestone and Goodrich companies tied up the elections in the federal courts.

Then, three days before Christmas, Firestone laid off 325 men in the battery department, which was the stronghold of the union. Indignation ran so high that a strike vote meeting was forced, but the motion for a strike was defeated by a slight majority. Since only 625 men attended the meeting, the union suffered serious impairment of prestige. It goes without saying that the "czar," as the men are commencing to call Claherty, did his part to sabotage the strike. He was the chairman and gave the floor mainly to his attorney, who counseled no strike, more patience.

There still are some militant rank-and-file leaders in the unions, and not a few of those whom Claherty ousted maintain contacts with union membership. But sad facts stare them in the face. Last year the Firestone local, for instance, had within its fold about 75 per cent of the 9,000 workers in that plant. Now it hasn't more than 2,000 members, and more are dropping out right along. Less than a year ago the Goodrich local had 8,000 out of about 9,600 Goodrich workers. Today, as already stated, it has only half the number. The Goodyear local, I am told, is "sure" of only 2,000 out of 12,000 company employees. Yet it is admitted everywhere in Akron that a year ago a program of real action led by the A. F. of L. could easily have unionized every factory practically 100 per cent.

But bad as the situation unquestionably is, a good many rank-and-file unionists—or progressives, as they are beginning to call themselves—maintain that although the A. F. of L. "leadership" has done untold harm to the spirit and solidarity of rubber labor, everything is not yet lost. In the past six weeks criticism of Claherty has become extremely outspoken among the workers, and a rank-and-file group headed by progressives is threatening to make a clean break from the A. F. of L. control and start and lead its own strike during the current high-production period. A good strike, they believe, would galvanize all the unions into the old mood for action. "If we don't do something soon," one man said, "demoralization will deepen and more men will leave the unions." Another progressive laborite said: "It is very possible, maybe even probable, that if something is started here before long, a majority of workers in Firestone, for instance, will walk out—they'll walk out spontaneously, despite the terrible decline in their organization, just as the General workers walked out last summer. This is peak season now. This is the time. In May it's liable to be too late. The strike idea is gaining. And if we succeed in pulling a strike, the chances are that we'll have not only a rubber strike but a city-wide strike, something like they had in 'Frisco last year. Claherty and

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the other conservatives won't be able to control things. The working people are sore as hell, not only those in rubber but those in the crafts in town, which are well organized and, except for some of the leaders, good outfits. Also, in a suburb here we have one of the national centers of the match industry, where labor is pretty sore, too, and stirring; and if we pull something in rubber, it's more than possible that the match industry will be touched off."

The rubber labor situation in Akron no doubt is very tense. The workers—like workers in many other industries and towns—*are* "sore as hell" or at least "pretty sore." They are full of grievances, not only against the companies and the A. F. of L. domination, but also against the government. Section 7-a, they believe, was a joke, and Roosevelt has decided to cooperate with big business. One worker with whom I talked, however, blamed labor in general and the A. F. of L. in particular for the collapse of 7-a and of Roosevelt's pro-labor policies. "Roosevelt," he said, "must be disgusted with the A. F. of L. I don't blame him for ignoring it in the matter of the automobile code. From now on it's up to the rank-and-file bunch, and we should say, 'To hell with Claherty and the A. F. of L.'" The recent admission by Francis Biddle to the Akron rubber workers that his NLRB was powerless to help them or any labor group had a very deep effect.

One left-wing laborite connected with the Workers Party of the United States believes that Akron will be both the Toledo and the San Francisco of 1935. Maybe so. I don't know. There is a very real probability that the tense rubber situation will snap some time during the current high-production season. Possibly soon.

On the other hand, important factors in the situation are working against the strike. Beneath the soreness of the workers and the intensity of their feelings against the A. F. of L., the companies, and the government, there is a lot of bewilderment, not only among the workers in general but also among the progressive leaders. Many of them have no real understanding of what has happened to them. Few have had any experience in strikes. Then, too, the workers are all too painfully conscious of the fact that the companies are prepared to meet any big upheaval with ruthless power. They are aware of the elaborate espionage system in the plants and throughout the city. Also, there is not too much money in the union treasuries. And suppose a rubber strike should provoke a city-wide strike—what then? There are comparatively few Communists in Akron, but the newspapers and the "patriotic" element will be certain to brand any real strike as communistic and un-American, as they did in Toledo and San Francisco. Would they, the workers, be able to withstand that? And isn't it possible that the big companies, in case of a great strike in Akron, would transfer their production for the rest of the year to Detroit, Indianapolis, and Los Angeles, where rubber labor is mostly in company unions or poorly organized?

All these misgivings, the rank-and-filers readily admit, are valid. "But," they say in effect, "we are forced to make a decision soon. We're at the crossroads. An open struggle against the industry for our elementary rights offers us partial hope of victory. A continuance of submission to the A. F. of L. policy will mean that the rubber workers' union movement which began in 1933 will be done for for years to come, or forever. If we don't do something soon, if we let Claherty run things, we may as well all join company unions and have 'slave' branded on our miserable hides."

Because the Judge Says So

By HEYWOOD BROUN

VICE-CHANCELLOR BERRY, of New Jersey, has just granted one of the most sweeping anti-labor injunctions ever issued in America. This temporary injunction was issued at the request of the trustees of the Newark *Ledger* against the Newspaper Guild strikers. In addition to the all too familiar provisions against picketing and talking to "loyal workers," the Chancellor has added two sections which should be of vast interest not only to labor groups but to liberals and newspaper publishers and radio stations.

Vice-Chancellor Berry has undertaken to restrain strikers or strike sympathizers from using the radio to say anything "annoying" to the trustees of the *Ledger*. "Annoying" is a very broad word. As a matter of fact, when anybody over the air says something quite contrary to your own beliefs or opinions, he generally annoys you. The word is sufficiently elastic to deny to the Guild all use of the air as a medium. It sets up a lone judicial officer as a sort of one-man radio commission. Unless this ruling is speedily knocked on the head it is hard to see how anybody can talk about the freedom of the air and still keep a straight face.

The publishers come into the picture through still another clause. This forbids the distribution of the *Guild Reporter* specifically, but also includes any printed material carrying "misleading" information about the *Ledger*. Here again we immediately leap into the field of opinion. The *Herald Tribune,* for instance, carried, the day after the injunction, a statement from the president of the American Newspaper Guild which said that Vice-Chancellor Berry's injunction was a tyrannical act of judicial power. It takes no great stretching of the Chancellor's ukase to bring the conservative *Herald Tribune* itself into danger. The opinion of the Guild president may be misleading in the mind of the jurist. People distributing the paper could then quite readily be cited for contempt of court.

And it is not unfair to point out that within the last twelve months the public has heard a great deal about the freedom of the press from newspaper owners. When the National Labor Relations Board decided against Hearst in favor of Dean Jennings, Howard Davis summoned all the publishers of the country into a convention and intimated that they would probably walk out of the newspaper code in order to defend the freedom of the press.

I am quite ready to admit that Mr. Davis probably is utterly sincere in his feeling that codes constitute a danger to what he calls the freedom of the press; but sincere or not,

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the phrase will have a hollow sound unless newspaper proprietors are prepared to defend the principle even when the danger to their own properties may be only potential.

For instance, it would seem logical for the owners of great and stable papers to join in the protests of small and feeble radical or liberal sheets which fall under some form of legislative oppression. Generally speaking, this has not been the case. Now, we can't quite be expected to grow excited over a freedom of the press which concerns the Chicago *Tribune* but has nothing on earth to do with the *Daily Worker*. It is a poor principle which fails to form a circular path and embrace all possible potentialities.

Perhaps the most arbitrary thing in the Berry injunction was the provision against loitering anywhere in the neighborhood of the *Ledger*. At the very beginning of the strike the Newark Guild hired strike headquarters in a room over a restaurant situated next door to the office of the paper, which was a natural enough spot to choose. Now the strikers are in doubt as to whether they may use the quarters they have contracted for, or even enter the restaurant to buy a cup of coffee. The man who goes down the street a little slowly may be considered by some policeman to be loitering.

In fact, I think this is the crux of the argument against the labor injunction. It imposes a wholly impossible duty upon the cop. In Newark, now, he must look at newspapers and see whether or not their news stories are misleading. It is part of his function to tune in on broadcasts to determine just what is potentially annoying, and with a stopwatch precision he must gauge whether a man is walking briskly toward his legitimate destination or loitering.

I say there is no sense to it. For instance, when an employer gets a temporary injunction he argues his necessities and very often receives relief from the court. In this preliminary hearing only one side is represented. It isn't enough to say that the labor group gets its chance later on in the argument as to whether the injunction should be made permanent—often there is a lapse of ten or twelve days, and an injunction which completely cripples a strike for as long as that generally defeats it. Obviously new legislation is needed.

The injunction remains almost the only kind of legal procedure in which the damage is done first and the corrections, if any, follow after.

Contributors to This Issue

Louis Fischer, *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, will bring out this month a new book, "Soviet Journey."

James Rorty, author of "Our Master's Voice: Advertising," has been traveling through the West investigating social and economic conditions.

Louis Adamic is the author of "Dynamite," "Laughing in the Jungle," "The Native's Return," and "Grandsons," his first novel, which will appear on March 20.

Heywood Broun, the well-known columnist of the *World-Telegram*, is the president of the American Newspaper Guild.

H. M. Parshley is professor of zoology at Smith College.

Reinhold Niebuhr is the author of "Reflections on the End of an Era."

Allen Tate is a Tennessee poet and critic.

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Books, Films, Drama

Biography of Typhus

Rats, Lice and History. By Hans Zinsser. Little, Brown and Company. $2.75.

UNDER the horrific title which Dr. Zinsser has chosen with the usual laboratory worker's scorn for the layman's squeamishness, he takes opportunity not only to tell the world about the subject of his research, typhus fever, but also to unburden himself of everything else that is on his mind, including a great fund of humor that only rarely becomes downright silly. The author has profited by his association with Professor W. M. Wheeler and others whom he mentions, and also shows signs of Menckenian influence, but all these things work together for good in the case of one who writes with a sound basis of common sense, knowledge, and originality, the net result being—in spite of the good doctor's protests—a first-rate example of popular science, together with an exposition of the author's views on art, war, the origin of life, great moments in the evolution of biology, religion, and the pathological determination of history.

The plan of the book is unique. It purports to be a biography but this is just the author's little scheme for working in his preliminary chapters on art, by way of apology for stepping forth in the role of biographer. Furthermore, if Dr. Zinsser were the biographer he pretends to be, he would never let his hero pale into insignificance as he does; for the louse, a lowly insect "belonging, strictly speaking, to the order of Anoplura," comes upon the scene in Chapter IX, before the poor hero has had a chance to do anything, and steals the show. The fact that this insect conveys typhus fever from man to man, or from man to rat to man, does nothing to diminish our common detestation; but the author, who through prolonged association has developed an ill-concealed affection for his little companion, makes so much of its innocent sufferings as man's fellow-victim of the typhus virus, and presents so grand a panorama of its historical degeneration from its "once free and liberty-loving" character to its present bourgeois state of parasitic content, that insensibly we come to share his enthusiasm, almost to the point of forgetting to recoil at mention of the word "lousy." And still the rat remains to be considered. Learned discussion of this rodent's history and classification takes us well past the middle of the book; and yet the author keeps stalling us off with pathetic appeals to our patience and sly efforts to play upon our human weakness for mere entertainment no matter what, like the vaudeville master of ceremonies whose star performer is not to be found. At last, in Chapter XII, the subject of the "biography" enters in person, and thereafter dominates the scene, with only occasional retirement in favor of Hippocrates, spotted fever, sixteenth-century warfare, Cortez, the Aztecs, the Thirty Years' War, soap and water, and the War to End War. Such is Zinsserian biography.

But let us go back to the earlier chapters in which the author reluctantly discusses various subjects "forced upon him" by circumstances. "The younger school of American biographical critics" infuriate Dr. Zinsser with their notions of art and science and their shallow dabbling in psychiatry; and he is equally disgusted with the novelists who sentimentalize medical research. Excitement and adventure, not service to humanity, he says, make men go into research on infectious disease, "one of the few genuine adventures left in the world." Whereupon the literary stooge enters and sets Dr. Zinsser off on his hilarious discussion of the relationship between science and art, in which he pays his respects to Edmund Wilson, Dr. Collins, Eddington and Jeans (who slide down from the cold heights of mathematics into the warm vales of theology), "most of the modern literary critics," Joyce and Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, saxophonic poetry, the idiot-child cult of literature, and the Reverend Dr. Fosdick. Science and art are not so far apart as the literary gentlemen seem to think; and nothing can stop the author from going on with his projected biography—if he ever gets to it. This doubt persists for a long time, as noted above, for first will come long and, one must admit, absorbing accounts of the nature and origin of life, the evolution of parasitism, syphilis, "new" diseases, the plague, the diseases of the ancients, and a view of what caused the fall of Rome that will be novel to most readers. It is only after this course of education that we are finally worthy of introduction to the louse, the rat, and typhus itself.

No one who buys this book will feel cheated, unless it be some Milquetoast who takes the author's advice and skips various portions; but, true to the traditions of the non-purchaser, the reviewer wishes to protest against the laziness of the author or the stinginess of the publisher, whichever is responsible for the lack of an index.

H. M. PARSHLEY

Mr. Laski Proceeds

The State in Theory and Practice. By Harold J. Laski. The Viking Press. $3.

NO contemporary political scientist has analyzed the problems of sovereignty and the state with greater clarity and precision and with a finer sense for the actualities of political history than Harold Laski. In his most recent volume he does justice to his earlier philosophical and historical interest in the character of the state by a rather final and telling refutation of the metaphysical theory of the state as held by Hegel and Bosanquet. Thereupon he proceeds to elaborate his theory of the state in more consistently Marxian terms than in any previous volume.

In a sense this new book is a further development of the thesis presented in his "Democracy in Crisis." In that volume he contended that a socialist party in democratic countries must seek to gain power by democratic means but must not expect its opponents to acquiesce peacefully in its assumption of power. He maintained that British constitutional history offered some hope, but only a slight one, that the erstwhile ruling classes would accept their parliamentary defeat without seeking to retrieve their power through the prestige of the crown and their control of the army. In the new volume he underscores this conclusion and goes slightly beyond it. A ruling capitalistic class may yield outer breastworks to the pressure of democracy in its period of expansion. But in the period of its contraction and decay a moment arrives in which one further step in retreat would mean abandoning its "inner citadel." In that moment it will rather abandon the democracy which has endowed its foes with political power than sacrifice its economic and political position.

In this new presentation of the case the rather desperate hope that British constitutional history might qualify this pattern, entertained but not accepted in the earlier volume, is definitely abandoned. A more important element in the progression of Laski's thought is that he no longer insists upon the necessity of arriving at power through constitutional means in a constitutional state. He preaches no romantic insurrectionism or revolutionism—in fact, he sees the difficulties so clearly that he seems to have moments in which he despairs of the possibility of success for his cause—yet the more rigorous implications of his present thesis are clear. He writes:

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> It . . . is essential for any party which is seeking to transform the economic foundations of society to maintain as long as it can a constitutional order which permits it openly to recruit its strength. The alternative is its reduction, as in Germany, from a movement to a conspiracy in which its prospects are always a gamble upon the outcome of disaster to the state which has driven it underground. In any case, it will be difficult, in proportion as its success within the framework of constitutionalism is rapid, to prevent its opponents from striking first.

In other words, while Laski warned complacent Social Democrats against the possibilities of counter-revolutionary movements after a Socialist government's assumption of power, he now warns against such a possibility before, and because of the prospect of, a Socialist victory. In this suggestion he goes beyond the general thesis of the Socialist League. But in general it may be said that Laski's application of a more and more vigorous Marxism to the problems of British and American politics accurately mirrors, as it no doubt also guides, the drift toward the left in British radical politics.

Laski is a typical British Marxian, which means that he combines Marxian realism with a uniquely British insight into the complexities of politics. He thus tends to qualify some of the Marxian doctrines without losing their intrinsic worth. His analysis of the relation of a dominant economic class to political power is, for instance, more convincing than most Marxian analyses. In his conception the dominant class does not merely use the state to enforce its rule. "Rightly or wrongly the purposes of the state are always referred by those who operate its sovereignty to a criterion of good they are prepared to defend. The defense must be in terms of reason." Naturally the sovereign group uses force upon those who are not persuaded by their particular reason, since reason is always colored by interest. But Laski never tires of insisting that sovereignty, while resting upon force, nevertheless involves a moral quality. For the right to use force is given to a government only because men accord it a reverence and respect which transcends the mere fear of force and which would be destroyed if and when naked self-interest dictated policy. "This book will have been written in vain," he declares, "if it suggests that I cast any doubt upon the motives of statesmen. My argument is a very different one, that ideas of good are never absolute but relative always to a given economic environment. And I have urged that in this environment, the function each class performs in the economic system will, broadly, shape its ideas of good." This particular sentence follows a discussion of the change made in the land policy of Kenya Colony when British imperialists discovered that there was gold in Kenya and that their previously adopted generous land policy prevented the exploitation of these riches. It will therefore seem to the most rigorous Marxists as a rather too generous recognition of the sincerity of statesmen.

The recognition of ethical motives in politics is not always brought into strict conformity with the basic Marxian analysis of the class antagonisms within the state. Thus, for instance, we read on page 148:

> We curb monopolies at every turn in the interest of the general consumer. We prohibit the practice of sweating in industry. Legislation like the factory acts . . . all show a concern by the state to subordinate profit-making to public welfare. As public opinion *grows more enlightened* we may expect that concern to grow, and as it grows the increasing tendency of state action will be to free itself from the bias of service to any special interest in the community.

On the very next page Mr. Laski says:

> What we call, in fact, the growth of social conscience is simply the changed idea of established expectation which has been brought about by the class struggle. The owners of the instruments of production are compelled to give way at certain points, even on occasion at critical points; but though they surrender the outworks, they do not yield the central citadel.

Both of these statements are undoubtedly true. But the first is not compatible with the second if the second is stated without qualification. This is not an important point. It merely reveals a seam in a garment cut on the whole from the cloth of Marxism but trimmed with insights taken from British constitutional history. Since the final product is extraordinarily impressive, more impressive in the judgment of this reviewer than similar but untrimmed garments, it is probably petty to call attention to the seam.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Center of the Language

A Winter Diary and Other Poems. By Mark Van Doren. The Macmillan Company. $1.90.

LET it be said at the beginning that Mr. Van Doren's chief defect as a poet seems to be his ease of expression. It is, I think, justly suspect in this age; but to understand it one must remember the age of Dryden, when poetry was not scrutinized closely for its high moments; it was an objective art with the properties of rhyme and meter, and an expected level of diction as well. It was not a specific kind of experience. Any kind of experience could go into it; the whole range of thought and feeling, from emotion at high tension to casual observation, naturally went into verse.

Mr. Van Doren's poetry is of this order, and I think it is necessary to bear the point in mind before we can even begin to decide how good the work is. If we are suspicious of a mellifluous tongue, we are suspicious because poetry is no longer an objective art; we are not satisfied with a mere high level of technical performance; we deny that the properties of such a performance have any force of themselves, or that the means of the performance, taken alone, exist.

This is all very well; but let us glance at what Mr. Van Doren has actually done in four volumes of miscellaneous poems and in one long narrative. I believe that "Jonathan Gentry" received its due from one reviewer. I do not mean that other persons did not praise it; simply that Miss Marianne Moore alone saw in it a sustained mastery of narrative style that is said to be impossible today. The three volumes, "Spring Thunder," "7 P. M.," and "Now the Sky," contain, to our modern taste, much that is negligible. But it should be remembered that they contain nothing that is bad. And they do contain a great deal of poetry that is sound and distinguished.

We are not to suppose that Mr. Van Doren is the kind of poet who does not know his own best work; who needs an editor or asks his reader to edit him. It is rather that the indifferent bulk of his verse points to an approach to his material that is a necessary condition of his best level. He is the only serious poet in this country who is able to apply constantly, without the unease of the social and historical mind, a single and remarkably pure sensibility to a medium that he is able to take on the whole for granted.

From the three earlier books of shorter poems I could select twenty that are among the best contemporary examples of poetry. From the new volume I should select about eight. Of no other poet in his generation could more be expected.

The title poem of the present volume, for all its sensitive observation, its sustained tone, and its clarity of outline, seems to me to suffer the disability of most long poems of our time: it has temporal progression from scene to scene, but it has little dramatic force. It is a lyrical impulse extended and thinned out in a chronological outline that is not, properly speaking,

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form. The same may be said of The Eyes—which, like Winter Diary, contains some of Mr. Van Doren's best writing—where the main symbolism runs off at the end into mere statement, a blurring of image that leaves the conclusion in the air.

The distinguished section of the book is Return to Ritual. These fifteen poems are a volume within a volume that I commend to the meditation of persons who demand of a poet, in his successive books, "growth" and ever some further novelty of style. In his best work over a period of ten years Mr. Van Doren has not "grown"; his style is essentially what it was in 1924. In Why Sing at All—

> So will the vales be green,
> And joy and desire stand up, and pride start growing

the general statement is not conceived in terms of anything that the poem allows us to know; it is a kind of statement that Mr. Van Doren did not permit himself in the early books; and if it is growth, it is to be deplored. But that he has grown in another sense, that he has steadily mastered a form that may be termed, I believe, the psychological lyric, and mastered it without any alteration of his original direction, cannot be denied. He is akin to Robinson in this, but not derivative of Robinson. In This Amber Sunstream the setting sun throws its slanting ray into a room; this is the last stanza:

> Another hour and nothing will be here.
> Even upon themselves the eyes will close.
> Nor will this bulk, withdrawing, die outdoors
> In night, that from another silence flows.
> No living man in any western room
> But sits at amber sunset round a tomb.

The poem is, I think, the high moment of the book. It should be read, of course, as a whole, many times. It belongs to no school; it offers no exciting new method to poets younger than Mr. Van Doren; it presents a common emotion in new but not startling terms, out of that common center of the language that few modern poets are able to master; and in the bald simplicity of diction the poet achieves an elegance of tone that cannot be explained as conscious style.

After this poem, it is, I fear, a little ungracious to discard all but a handful of Mr. Van Doren's thirty-four sonnets. Sonnet XXI is distinguished; three or four others reward careful study. But is not the sonnet inherently a romantic form? It states a crisis; the emotion is defined by means of counter-statement; this, at least, is the method of Shakespeare, who must be our standard. As I have said, Mr. Van Doren has a limpidity and an ease that long ago ceased to be general features of poetry; perhaps we should not ask him, a meditative poet, to sustain a long dramatic sequence of sonnets. But we shall continue to demand of him the kind of poetry that we find in This Amber Sunstream. We cannot decide absolutely how good it is; but if it is good, it is clear that it will be as good in 1980 as it is today.

ALLEN TATE

An Elegant Politician

Chester A. Arthur. A Quarter Century of Machine Politics. By George F. Howe. Dodd, Mead and Company. $4.

THIS is a sober and unbiased study of President Arthur—the first biography of him which has ever appeared. Undertaken obviously not to glorify him or to write him down, but to present the facts of his odd and little understood career, Professor Howe's book makes a genuine contribution to our knowledge of a period in American political history which is only just beginning to attract the attention of scholars.

Arthur himself was one of the few Presidents who turned out to be better than expected. He was an extraordinary combination of a professional spoils politician and "elegant gentleman" in the best sense in which this term was once used. He was an excellent organizer of New York troops during the Civil War, modestly rendering really valuable military service although never going to the front, but he had been a mainstay of as crooked a political machine as New York State ever witnessed. He was rich, well bred, welcome in good society, and was even a member of the Century Club in New York, which also contained his chief journalistic and reform critics. Yet he attached himself to Conkling's "Stalwart" machine and became an ardent Grant man; during the years 1861-71 he exerted behind the scenes such an influence upon the Republican Party that the New York *Times* declared it to be greater than that of any other man. This was not, it explained, because he was a genius or brilliant, but because he had executive ability and a rare knowledge of men. In 1871 he became Collector of Customs, then perhaps the most powerful political office in New York.

Professor Howe has succeeded in telling clearly and interestingly the involved story of the political intrigues in the stormy years which followed, without, however, being able to throw much new light on events. He recites well the reasons for the removal of Arthur from the collectorship by President Hayes, and the break between Arthur and Conkling over the former's nomination for the Vice-Presidency in 1880. The Garfield men insisted upon the nomination of a New York Stalwart to insure the loyalty of that faction. It was first offered to Levi P. Morton, who declined it, and then to everybody's amazement it went to Arthur—"the surprising nomination" Professor Howe dubs it. Naturally the defeat of Blaine in the contest for the first place on the ticket left bitter feelings, and when Arthur became President, there were no sharper and more hostile comments upon him than came from the pen of Mrs. Blaine, who could never forgive him for dropping Blaine as Secretary of State. It is a fact that all over the country many people believed that Garfield had been assassinated in order to put Arthur and Conkling in charge of the country, and it was asserted that the new President was "a low politician of evil objectives and great force." Ex-President Hayes wrote in his diary that President Garfield's death "would be a national calamity" because it would mean the accession to power of Arthur.

How admirably Mr. Arthur bore himself while Garfield's life slowly ebbed away, how he confounded his enemies when President by good appointments, by actually championing civil-service reform, by conducting the Presidency with great dignity and tact—even breaking with Senator Conkling and other old party associates—makes extremely good reading. It is noteworthy that it was Arthur who started us on the way to a big new navy, that he favored a much larger free list of tariff exemptions—so that he was accused of being a free trader—but finally, like so many other Presidents, signed a tariff bill containing much higher rates than he desired, and that he reduced the national debt by $400,000,000. Strange as it seems today, his chief trouble was an overflowing Treasury! When he retired from office on March 4, 1885, he had the good-will of a large majority of the newspapers of the country. There remained for him then only fourteen months of life, as he died on May 16, 1886. President Arthur left astoundingly few personal papers; Professor Howe was able to trace only ninety letters, all others having disappeared, and there is no collection of manuscripts or documents of any kind.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Next week's literary section of The Nation *will contain reviews of new novels, including Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "He Sent Forth a Raven," Louis Adamic's "Grandsons," Thomas Wolfe's "Of Time and the River," and others.*

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Films

The Uses of Humor

HOW false it is to maintain that humor, like love, poetry, and certain other rare commodities in this world, is altogether without use is one of the reflections that one is likely to take away from "The Whole Town's Talking" (Radio City Music Hall). This newest vehicle for the expanding talents of Edward G. Robinson is incomparably the most entertaining Hollywood offering of the season. For witty observation of the American flora and fauna, for rapidity of movement, and for general excellence of acting and direction, it can only be compared, among recent efforts in the comic field, with last year's "It Happened One Night." It matters little that it is built on one of the oldest conceits known to comedy—the notion that two people not of the same germ cell can so closely resemble each other as to be taken for one and the same person. The role that Mr. Robinson is required to play is that of a gentle, noble-minded, and very much harassed clerk in a large office who looks so much like the reigning "public enemy" that he is arrested on sight. In addition to the more obvious hilarities made possible by the situation, the story includes some bountiful satire on the efficiency methods of modern business offices, the collusion between big business and the newspapers for publicity purposes, and the stereotyped tactics of the police in their grueling of witnesses and suspects. But the situation also makes possible an almost surreptitious revival of a kind of appeal which one had believed that the League of Decency had permanently discouraged. The truth is that Mr. Robinson is much more convincing as the blood-thirsty successor of Little Caesar than as the mild-tempered little clerk from Wall Street. Somewhere toward the middle of the picture the atmosphere of genial satire that has been built up is pierced through by an easily recognizable note of a harder and more sinister quality. The scenes between the gangster Mannion and his double are certainly more notable for their sadistic fascination than for any elements of wholesome humor. The expression on Mannion's face after he has finished off one of his former henchmen in the prison yard is anything but pretty, and no subsequent comedy in the film wipes it from the memory as definitely as it is allowed to dissolve on the screen. In brief, the traditional comic device employed in this picture is really a cleverly inspired dodge, or, to use a possibly more orthodox underworld expression, a "blind" to confuse the unsuspecting cardinals and compilers of the League of Decency bulletins.

It may seem equally far-fetched to suggest a possible hidden purpose behind the somewhat dated humor of "Ruggles of Red Gap"; but the film, even more than the Harry Leon Wilson novel as one remembers it, stresses the advantages of what Mark Sullivan euphemistically describes as "the American system." Most of the emphasis, far too much for the humor of the occasion, is placed on Ruggles's triumphant rise from the rank of butler in a Western frontier town to that of proprietor of the Anglo-American Grill. In fact, Mr. Laughton's Ruggles is, on the whole, a rather pathetic creature. The best comic passages are those between Mary Boland and Charlie Ruggles; and Roland Young is, as always, perfect in the very few scenes in which he is allowed to appear. But whether because of the lesson in American idealism just referred to or because of the strain of watching Mr. Laughton in an inappropriate role the picture falls short of recovering the pre-depression insouciance of the *Saturday Evening Post* classic.

WILLIAM TROY

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Drama

Expatriates Again

IN one of our tabloids I notice the report that a play called "De Luxe" (Booth Theater) is a "society hit." Perhaps the tabloid doesn't know what "society" is, but if it actually does, then that mysterious entity is even worse off than this play about some of its members implies. For society's judgments I have no exaggerated respect, but I am loath to believe that even the best people can be taken in by anything quite so completely phony as this preposterous piece of romantic nonsense in which a group of gaudily unconvincing degenerates talk about their lost souls and wish, between drinks, that they could do "the decent thing."

"De Luxe" is portentously labeled "a play about the end of an epoch," but it is hard to believe that Louis Bromfield really took very seriously his part in its composition. Few persons, I should have supposed, are still very much interested in the more drunken expatriates reeling about Paris, but that is not the point. However unimportant they are, it would doubtless still be possible to write convincingly about them, and there certainly never was a time when a play like the present could have seemed other than the taudriest of inventions. Sometimes when the characters come out with biological remarks of extreme simplicity one seems to detect the hand of a rather retarded sophomore; at other times it is difficult not to suspect intentional burlesque, as I could hardly help doing when the irresistible Don Juan explained to a young girl bent on experiment that he might be a rotter but that he still had a respect for innocent virginity. Another big moment occurs when the leading nymphomaniac goes to "the wisest woman in Paris" to seek advice on the management of a restive lover and is told—you would never guess—that she ought not to let him see so clearly how much she cares. Surely reputations for wisdom must be easily acquired in Paris.

Possibly I do not know life. Possibly the worst of the expatriates really did behave like this, but I get my ideas from such sober authors as Michael Arlen, and his personages are not only prim but highly credible by comparison. Elsa Maxwell, obligingly played by herself, was to me the only character in the play who seemed at all authentic and in retrospect even she appears a little bit improbable.

"Petticoat Fever" (Ritz Theater) marks no epic in the development of dramatic literature but it is a source of at least reasonably innocent merriment. The author keeps to no style of comedy or farce and gets his laughs as he can. Nevertheless, he does get them in goodly number, and I found some good fun in his story of the solitary young wireless operator in a Labrador waste who comes to realize, amid the snow and ice, that his earlier youth had been insufficiently ill spent. Dennis King is pleasant if not particularly subtle as the young man in question, and the two young ladies who turn up at once are pleasant-looking even to eyes more accustomed than those of the hero to such sights.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Anyone who, in spite of language barrier, enjoyed the Habima performance of "The Dybbuk" or Maurice Schwartz's "Yoshe Kalb," will find in "Recruits" (Artef Theater) a moving and artistic spectacle. The Artef Theater is composed for the most part of a group of Jewish workers who have maintained a repertory playhouse for the past nine years. "Recruits," which is their first production of this season, is an admirable adaptation of an old Russian play. It deals with

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a Jewish community's reaction to an order of Nicholas I demanding a quota of Jewish conscripts for a long period of military service. Although "Recruits" is not a propaganda play in any obvious sense, it is an ironic picture of class conflict within a small and supposedly homogeneous group. The settings, designed by Solotaroff, are remarkably expressive of the mood and spirit of the play and help much to integrate its folklore and theme. M. G.

The Dance

The "Problems" of the Ballet

FOREMOST among the processes of vicarious atonement is the ballet. Are we physically sluggish after too many months of winter? Then let a few lithe experts on the stage be agile for us. Are we made poor in manners, through having dodged among traffic, pushed through subway crowds, and grabbed a bite on the run? Then let a dozen lovely young girls devote their entire day to modulations of the body, until they become miracles of gracefulness. Are we, who deal primarily with the *symbols* of production and distribution, inclined to lose our zest for muscular expression? Then let a special group be charged with the upholding of this function. Let them attain the acme of physical discipline, in behalf of our flaccidness. In this sense, the ballet is another world. If it is decadent, the decadence is not the fault of choreographer and dancer. The decadence arises from the fact that the great disproportion between the exertions of the performer and the languishing of the audience makes naturally for the *spectacular* kind of art, the Roman circus. We demand something like a good murder trial; we would look on in comfort while criminals are thrown to the lions. Unless the feats are extreme, we withhold our sovereign approval. And as a rule, we are more likely to consider it a feat when someone hurls himself violently through the air than when a delicate movement of the body from one balanced position to another is accomplished with calm felicity.

How did the performances of the new American Ballet at the Adelphi Theater meet these difficulties? First, we saw a "Reminiscence," a set of pleasant maneuvers which dualistically combined the conventional and expressive trends of ballet dancing. Atop a formalism surviving somewhat as a fossil from times when courtly criteria prevailed, we were given a bouquet of differentiated moods, mounting to a climactic ensemble of excitingly dispersed activity—a very pleasant display, danced to the display music of Godard. Next there was "Alma Mater," a decidedly effete satire on college life, which the public seemed particularly to like. There was an element of realism here, since the subject was chosen with reference to an aspect of contemporary life. But it was not danced by the exaggerated projection of naturalistic observations, as our good mimic comedians might have done it. Rather, the dancers seemed to have arrived at their studiedly boorish gestures by the simple negation of their training in gracefulness.

Lastly came "Errante," a symbolic piece, depicting asperities encountered by a brave, determined, and lonely woman on the path of life, and incidentally affording Tamara Geva an opportunity to do some remarkable management of an abnormally long green train. The entanglement of streamers, as she was confused by the love of two men, was effective both visually and allegorically—and, likewise, the shadow of the lover unattainably mounting the rope ladder was appealing, though the loose end of the ladder wiggled with movements disturbingly irrelevant to the rhythms of the music (somewhat

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the same sort of discordancy as one suffers when, in Wagner, Siegfried's horse clumps unsympathetically across the stage).

Repeatedly the audience registered its enthusiasm—and rightly, for they were being treated to a rare form of workmanship. Yet I do not feel that the American Ballet has wholly solved its "problems."

The dance was originally religious. In the era of primitive magic it was as "practical" as medicine or chemistry; for in the savage schema of causality such benign events as the abundance of crops and victory in war could only be brought about by their symbolic enactment in dance form. Even the Mass is but a highly ritualized development of dance steps. In the irreligious present this magical importance of the dance has largely been taken from it. Only among the Communists do we find evidence that something of its primitive magical function can be regained. At the recent Hanns Eisler concert, for instance, a towering woman in stark costume and challenge-like postures seemed to be coercing history mimetically by her many physical variants of the clenched fist.

But if the magical function of the dance is eliminated, what do you have left? You can have courtliness, which is a troublesome offering in that its extreme grace and formalism are thoughts out of season. You can have allegory, or symbolism, which makes in the end for a few basic patterns of pictorial interest, the *spectacle*, with all that it entails in the way of decadence. Or lastly, you can have realism, which practically destroys the ballet as such. Among these, I suspect that realism is the most fertile. For hoary precedent, we can go back to the origins of the dance here also, as savages are reported to have taken delight in the choric reproduction of their occupational habits, and in naturalistic mimicry of animals. "Alma Mater" was a step in this direction, but a feeble one.

The way in which the felicitous use of the body could most instruct us, it seems to me, would not be by the creation of abstract loveliness, for which we are too damned unfit, but by helping us build anew from the areas of mimetic expression in which we still have some spontaneous experience. It might help us regain the use of posture and gesture by ritualistically projecting the ways in which we do actually move and place ourselves. It must be very patient, and not get too far ahead of us who are mimetically ailing.

My dog is a dancer. Not that he can pirouette on his hind legs—for I could teach him no tricks. But in the surprising way he conjugates, let us say, the verb "to eat." For the present tense he uses, quite literally, the act of eating. But for the future tense, to say "I will eat," he sniffs at his plate, glances ill-naturedly at the cat, and salivates. And to express the perfect tense of this astoundingly irregular verb, to say "I have eaten," he picks himself a cool spot under the porch, curls up, and goes to sleep. Dancing may be linguistically as versatile as that. And Malinowsky has noted, in his study of the Trobriand Islanders, that their actual linguistic structure retains much of this quality. Perhaps the dance can illuminatingly bewilder our linguistic habits of mind, and tends ultimately to become mystical, because it is thus always living in the "eternal now," making its pasts and futures by non-logical leaps into the present tenses of other verbs. As such, it is a most vital art—which leads me to vote that we are extremely lucky to have the American Ballet just as it is.

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